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North American Review

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The Utility Companies & the Farmers

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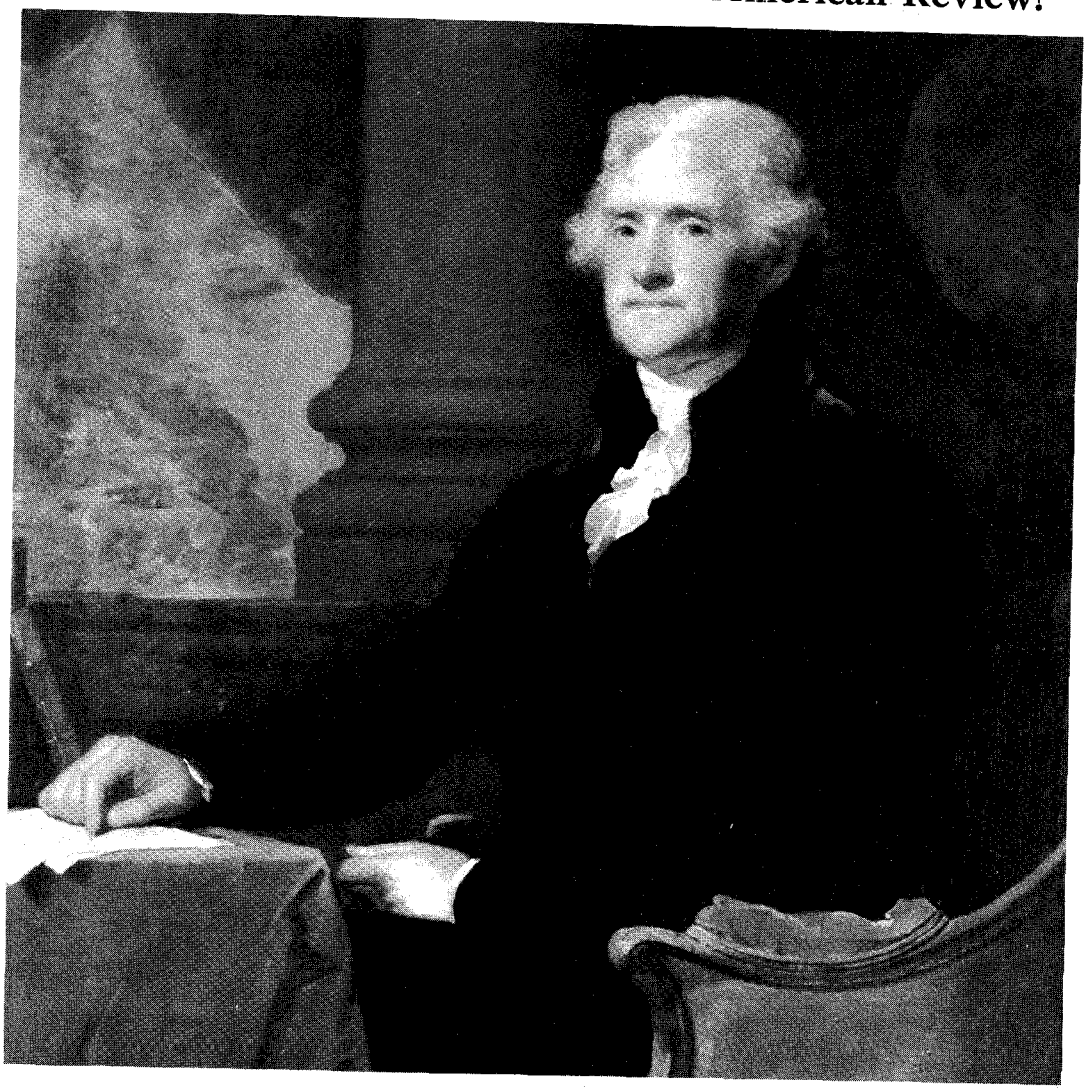

Sir Monticello Mar. 27. 25.

I am a subscriber to the N. American review and understand you are agent for that work in Richmond. it will be more convenient for me to have it furnished from that place because payment there is easier made. I shall be glad therefore to receive it from you. and this letter presented to Colo. Bernard Peyton of Richmond (my correspdt) will ensure your receiving payment from him on my account, once a year or oftener if you chuse. I have received No. 46. but not Nos. 44. and 45. which I shall be glad therefore now to receive. accept the assurance of my respect.

Th: J

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THE North American Review

Founded in 1815 Volume 263, Number 1 Spring 1978

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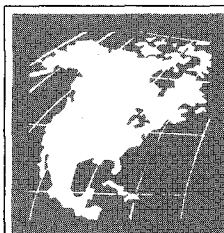

Evan Connell:

Vinland: Speculations & Certainties

The most complete accounts of early Norse voyages to America are The Greenlanders' Saga and Eirik's Saga. Both were written long after the events they describe and both are copies or variations of earlier accounts that have been lost.

The Greenlander's Saga is part of a large vellum codex known as the *Flateyjarbók*, which was commissioned sometime between 1382 and 1395 by a wealthy Icelandic farmer named Jon Hakonarson who lived—as the title indicates—on a flat island. The book was carefully preserved by his descendants until one of them gave it to an Icelandic bishop, who gave it to the King of Denmark. It is now in the Royal Library.

There are two versions of Eirik's Saga. One occurs in *Hauksbók*, which dates from about 1334 and was written by a certain Hauk Erlendsson 'the Lawman' with the help of two secretaries. Erlendsson was descended from one of the first Norsemen to visit America, he was quite proud of this fact, and scholars believe he revised history somewhat in order to make his family seem still more illustrious. The other version appears in *Skálholtsbók*, which probably was written during the second half of the fifteenth century, and because it is later than Erlendsson's version it was at first assumed to be less accurate. But apparently the opposite is true; the *Skálholtsbók* copyist, no doubt descended from a long line of impoverished and lusterless clerks, did not care about history. He only wanted to produce a satisfactory duplicate so that he could get paid. At any rate, if you read medieval Norse and wish to compare them, both are in Copenhagen's Arnamagnaean Library.

The Greenlanders' Saga and Eirik's Saga recount many of the same events, though not all, and occasionally while telling the same story they contradict each other—which makes historical detective work just that much more difficult. Considering this, as well as the sparse evidence from other sources, and the obscurities, and the centuries that have elapsed since Leif and his half-sister Freydis and Thorfinn and the others went adventuring, and the fact that both sagas are either variants or perhaps inaccurate copies of lost manuscripts—considering these handicaps, only an arrogant and simple-minded historian would claim to have deduced the truth absolutely.

Even so, the sagas are not fiction.

It is well known that scholars fight like spiders in a bottle over the interpretation of artifacts and crumbling parchment, and the medieval Norse explorations have particularly excited their testiness, making it almost impossible for an ignorant reader to know which gray eminence to believe. All the same, this seems to be more or less what happened:

In 985 or 986 A.D. a young Icelandic trader named Bjarni Herjolfsson returned from Norway to spend the winter with his father, as he customarily did every second year. But when he got to the farm it was deserted, and neighbors told him that his father had accompanied Eirik the Red to Greenland. Bjarni, according to one translation, was 'taken heavily aback' by this news, and instead of unloading his cargo he decided to sail on to Greenland. Having never been there, he asked where it was to be found and what it looked like; and after being told that it lay somewhere to the west Bjarni asked his crewmen if they were prepared to go there with him, because Greenland was where he meant to spend this winter.

They said they would go with him.

He told them that the trip might be considered foolhardy, since none of them had been to the Greenland Sea. But they told him they would go, if that was what he had in mind.

After taking aboard fresh supplies they left Iceland, not in one of those classic dragonships with brightly painted shields overlapping the rail but in a broad-beamed wallowing merchant ship called a knarr. They sailed west for three days 'until the land sank into the sea.' Then, we are told, 'the fair wind dropped, and there was a north wind and fog, and they did not know where they were going. Day after day passed like this. Then the sun came out again, and they were able to get their bearings from the sky.'

Presently they saw land. They asked each other if this could be Greenland. Bjarni did not think it was, but they sailed closer to take a look. The country was low, with many trees and small hills. They turned away and sailed north.

Two days later they again sighted land. The crew asked if this might be Greenland. Bjarni did not think it was, 'for there are said to be huge glaciers in Greenland,' while this country was flat and heavily forested. The crew wanted to put ashore because they needed fresh water, but he refused, so they continued sailing north.

Several days later they sighted land for a third time. They could see mountains and glaciers, but again Bjarni refused to put ashore, saying that the country had an inhospitable look. So, once more, 'they turned their prow from the land and held out to sea with the same following wind.'

The wind freshened and they sailed four days and nights until they again saw land.

"From what I have been told," said Bjarni, "this most resembles Greenland. Here we will go ashore."

They landed that evening at a cape and saw a boat nearby. Bjarni's father, Herjolf, was living on this cape, which has been known ever since as Herjolfsnes.

'The next thing that happened,'

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says the narrator of The Greenlander's Saga, 'was that Bjarni Herjolfsson came from Greenland to see Earl Eirik'—which refers not to Eirik the Red but to Earl Eirik Hakonarsson who ruled Norway from 1000 to 1014. During this visit Bjarni described the lands he had seen when he was blown off course fifteen years earlier and people at the court rebuked him for his lack of curiosity, telling him that he should have gone ashore.

The following summer he was back in Greenland. His embarrassment at court must have been the subject of considerable gossip; but more important, the sagas tell us that 'there was now great talk of discovering new countries.' And presently Eirik the Red's son, Leif, bought Bjarni's ship and signed up a crew of thirty-five.

Old Eirik was asked to lead this voyage of exploration, just as he had led the colonists from Iceland to Greenland. He consented reluctantly, observing that he was not able to stand bad weather as he used to. But on the day they were to embark, while they were riding horseback to the ship, he was thrown and injured his foot. "It is not fated that I shall discover more lands than Greenland, on which I live," he said. "We can go no further together."

Eirik the Red then returned to his farm, called Brattahlid, while Leif and the crew went aboard. Among the crew was a southerner, probably a German, named Tyrkir, who is identified in some accounts as Leif's godfather.

They followed Bjarni's route backward, coming first to the inhospitable country. 'They made for land, lowered the boat and rowed ashore; but they saw no grass there. The uplands were covered with glaciers, and from the glaciers to the shore it was like one great slab of rock.' Because the country was so flat Leif called it Helluland. The leading candidates for Helluland seem to be Baffin Island and Newfoundland.

Next they came to the forest land, which they named Markland. It sounds like an agreeable place, 'with white sandy beaches shelving gently to the sea', but according to the sagas Leif and his men stayed only a short time before hurrying back to their ship 'as fast as they could.' Why they were anxious to leave is not explained. Nor do we know exactly where they were, but it must have been either Labrador or Nova Scotia.

Two days later they reached an island and went ashore. The weather was fine. They saw dew on the grass, which they tasted, 'and they thought that never had they tasted anything as sweet.' Then they returned to the ship and entered the sound which lay between the island and a cape projecting northward from the mainland.

'They sailed westward past the cape. It was very shallow at low tide. Their ship went aground and it was a long way from the ship to the sea. But they were so impatient to get to land that they did not want to wait for the tide to rise under their ship but ran ashore at a place where a river flowed out of a lake.'

As soon as the tide refloated their ship they brought it upriver and into the lake. Here they cast anchor, carried their sacks of hide ashore, and built some little stone-and-turf huts. Later, when they decided to winter at this place, they built houses. The lake and the river both were full of huge salmon, and the countryside looked as though cattle could survive without fodder. There was no frost at all, and the grass scarcely withered.

When the house-building had been completed Leif divided his men. Some were sent out every day to explore the countryside, with orders that they should not become separated and that they should return by nightfall. For a time everything went well, but one evening Tyrkir was missing. 'Leif was much distressed by this, because Tyrkir had been with his father for a long time and he had been very fond of Leif when he was a child. Leif spoke harsh words to his companions. . .'

With twelve men he set out to find Tyrkir, but they had not gone very far when Tyrkir showed up. He was obviously happy, rolling his eyes and laughing and talking in German so that nobody understood what he was saying. The Greenlanders' Saga describes him as being small, dark, and seedy in appearance, with a sharply sloping forehead and an unsteady eye, but very good at all kinds of odd jobs.

"Why are you so late, foster-father?" asked Leif. "And why did you leave your comrades?"

Tyrkir coninued laughing and grimacing and talking in German, but at last he spoke in Norse. "I have some news for you," he said. "I have found vines with grapes."

"Is that true, foster-father?" Leif asked.

"Of course it's true," said Tyrkir, "because where I was born there are plenty of vines and grapes."

In the morning Leif said to his men, "Now we have two kinds of work. We must pick grapes and cut vines and we must fell trees, so that we have a good cargo."

In the spring when they returned to Greenland their ship was loaded with timber and with vines and grapes. Leif named the place Vinland.

Now, where was this lush country?

* * *

The sagas give many clues, some quite pointed, others too general to be of much help. That sweet-tasting dew, for instance, has been identified by some detectives as the sweet excreta of certain plant lice and flies—but this could be found any number of places. Others who have studied the problem say it may have been only the dew that normally collects overnight, and the men had been aboard ship so long that they were eager for a taste of fresh water. Others consider the incident a fabrication which should be disregarded.

As for grapes, some thirty varieties grow wild in the northeastern United States and Nova Scotia. Along the coast at the present time they grow no further north than Massachusetts, which would seem to establish Vinland's northern limit. However, in Leif's day the climate might have been different, which would extend that boundary. In the 1530s, for instance, Jacques Cartier saw grapevines on both banks of the St. Lawrence, where none grow today. And botanists who examined pollen found in the ruins of Greenland Viking settlements have concluded that eleventh century weather was not bad, certainly no worse than it is today, perhaps a little warmer.

The great argument about grapes, though, is not how far north they might have been growing during the Middle Ages, but whether Leif's men actually found any. The quarrel hangs like a sword over the syllable *vin* or *vín*. In the original manuscript—long lost—did that syllable, or did it not, have a diacritical mark? Was Leif talking about Vinland or Vínland? Because the minuscule notation makes an enormous difference. Without the mark it means meadow,

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grassy land, pasture land; with the mark it means wine country, grapevine country. In other words, how far north or south the Vikings camped might depend on whether Leif spoke of grass or grapes. The sagas clearly suggest that Tyrkir was unnaturally exhilarated, and nobody ever has been known to get drunk on crushed grass, which argues that he was loitering amidst the vín, not the vin. Alas, things are not that simple. Perhaps Tyrkir discovered wild berries, not grapes, and the Vikings sailed home to Greenland with a boatload of berries.

Now about the salmon, a cold water fish. Today it swims no further south than New York, which ought to establish a southern boundary for Vinland—thus eliminating Virginia and North Carolina where some students of the problem have situated it. But one thousand years ago a warmer ocean would have kept the salmon in higher latitudes.

On the other hand, because of a remark in the sagas concerning the winter solstice, one scholar calculated that Vinland must be between 27° and 31°—in Florida. Still another researcher, using the same information, located it on Chesapeake Bay.

Somebody else has recently drawn up an impressive list of details proving beyond doubt that Leif and his men wintered at Plymouth. Furthermore, he believes he has determined not only the precise route from Greenland but the approximate time of year the Vikings arrived and even the time of day. His argument covers many pages and could hardly be more persuasive. That is, until you listen to somebody else.

So the squabble persists, point and counterpoint.

In any event, Leif had not been home very long when one of his brothers, Thorvald, volunteered to explore Vinland further.

"Well, brother," said Leif to Thorvald, "you can sail my ship, if you like."

Thorvald took thirty men and reached the Vinland encampment with no trouble. They spent that winter comfortably, for there were plenty of fish, and the following summer they explored the western coast. They saw no animals or humans, but they did come across a small wooden structure which apparently was an Indian grain-bin.

The next summer while exploring the east coast they saw three curious humps or mounds on the beach, which turned out to be hide-covered boats with three 'skraelings' asleep under each boat. Skraeling cannot be translated exactly, but it refers to the native inhabitants of Greenland and North America and is contemptuous, meaning barbarian or screamer or wretch. Whether these skraelings were Eskimos or Indians is not known. Some anthropologists believe they were the now extinct Beothuk or Micmac Indians. The hide-covered boats, however, could have been Eskimo umiaks which are larger than kayaks. At any rate, Thorvald's men crept up to them and killed eight of the sleepers. One escaped.

Then, after returning to the headland from which they had looked down on these boats, the Vikings became sleepy. But all at once 'they were aroused by a voice shouting: "Awake, Thorvald! Awake with all your men! Hurry to the ship and leave quickly if you would save your lives!" Then came a great fleet of skin-boats to attack them.'

During this fight Thorvald was hit by a freak shot—an arrow struck him in the armpit. "I think it will be the death of me," he said.

He asked to be carried to a place not far away where he had planned to build a house. There he was buried, with a cross at his head and another at his feet, so the place was named Krossanes.

Thorvald's men remained at Leif's camp that winter, loading their ship with vines and grapes, and in the spring they sailed back to Greenland.

Another of Leif's brothers, Thorstein, volunteered to bring home Thorvald's body. He outfitted the same ship and took along his wife Gudrid, but the voyage was a disaster. They got lost, either because of storms or fog, and ended up not in Vinland but at a small Viking settlement on the upper coast of Greenland. They were obliged to spend the winter there, and Thorstein died of the plague.

Shortly after his death, while Gudrid was seated near the bench on which his body was lying, Thorstein sat up and began to speak. This is what he said:

"I am anxious to tell Gudrid what lies ahead of her, that she may bear my death more resignedly, for I have come to a good resting-place. What I have to tell you, Gudrid, is this—that you will be given in marriage to an Icelander, and long shall be your life together. Many descendants shall spring from you and him—vigorous, fair, sweet, and good. You shall leave Greenland for Norway, and Norway for Iceland, and in Iceland make a home. There you will live, the two of you, for a long time, and you shall live longer than he. You shall go abroad, and make a pilgrimage south to Rome, and return home to Iceland to your own place, whereupon a church shall be raised there, where you will live and take the vows of a nun, and where you will die."

After this Thorstein lay down again on the bench. Later his body was dressed and carried to the ship. Another crew was formed because many of his men also had died of the plague, and with Gudrid aboard they returned to the main settlement.

That summer the Icelander arrived. He was a merchant named Thorfinn Karlsefni. He fell in love with Gudrid, and asked permission to marry her. Eirik consented. There was great joy at Brattahlid, we are told, with gaming and the telling of sagas and other diversions.

'There was also much talk of Vinland voyages . . .'

Karlsefni, urged by Gudrid, organized a large expedition consisting of sixty men, five women including Gudrid herself, and various kinds of livestock. It appears that they hoped to establish a permanent colony.

They settled in Leif's houses and for a while things went well. The skraelings began to come around, peacefully, and the Vikings traded with them. But one of the skraelings tried to steal a knife or an axe, he was killed by a Viking, and another battle took place.

At this point The Greenlanders' Saga and Eirik's Saga do not agree. The first says nothing about Leif's terrible half-sister Freydis being a member of the Karlsefni expedition; but according to Eirik's Saga she was present, and during this fight with the skraelings she did something so odd that it could hardly have been invented.

First, though, the ballistic missile must be mentioned. The skraelings hurled some objects at the Vikings. These may have been stones sewn up in leather cases and launched from poles, which would suggest Indians; or they could have been Eskimo har-

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poons attached to bladders. The Algonquins are said to have used this leather-bound stone centuries ago, but on the other hand there is no mention of Indian arrows. At any rate, these blue-black flying objects terrified the Vikings who turned and ran away.

Then Freydis appeared. She picked up the sword of a dead Viking and as the skraelings rushed toward her she pulled out her breasts and whetted the blade on them. Some translations say she slapped her breasts with the sword. Anyway, this spectacle frightened the savages worse than the ballista had frightened the Vikings: 'They were aghast and fled to the boats and rowed away.'

* * *

Karlsefni's party stayed one more winter in the New World. They liked it and wanted to remain, but realized that there would always be trouble with the skraelings, so when spring came they returned to Greenland with a load of timber, grapes, and furs. With them was a new passenger—Gudrid's baby son Snorre, born in America almost six centuries before Virginia Dare.

It is said that Karlsefni, his wife Gudrid, and their son Snorre eventually went to Iceland where Karlsefni bought a farm at Glaumby. After his death Gudrid and her son managed it until Snorre got married. Then Gudrid made a pilgrimage to Rome, after which she became a nun and lived the rest of her life in accordance with the prophecy.

Next we hear of Helgi and Finnbogi, two Icelandic brothers who may or may not have been planning a trip to Vinland when they were approached by Freydis. She proposed a joint expedition on two ships, sharing equally whatever profit they might make. Each ship would carry thirty men and a few women. The Icelanders agreed to this, so Freydis went to Leif and asked for the houses he had built on Vinland. Leif said he would not give them to her, although she might have the use of them.

The two ships sailed together, but the brothers arrived first. Assuming the expedition was to be fully cooperative, they and their men moved into Leif's houses; but when Freydis arrived she ordered them out. And now the brothers learned something else about their business partner: she had brought along five extra men.

"We are no match for you in wickedness, we brothers," said Helgi. The Icelanders then moved out and built a shed for themselves a little distance away.

During the winter there was more trouble and the two parties stopped visiting each other.

Early one morning Freydis got up and dressed, but did not put on shoes and stockings although the grass was wet with dew. She put on her husband's cloak and walked to the shed where the brothers and their men were living. One of the men had just gone outside, leaving the door half open. Freydis stood in the doorway for a while without saying anything. Finnbogi was awake and saw her. He asked what she wanted.

"I want you to come outside with me," she answered. "I want to talk to you."

Finnbogi got up and went outside. They sat on a log next to the shed.

"How do you like things here?" she asked.

"I like this country," he said, "but I don't like the quarrel that has come between us and I see no reason for it."

"What you say is true," she answered. "I feel the same. But the reason I came to see you is that I would like to exchange ships. Your ship is larger than mine and I would like to get away from here."

"All right," he said, "if that will make you happy."

Then they parted. Finnbogi returned to his bed and Freydis walked home. When she climbed into bed her cold wet feet woke up her husband, who asked where she had been. She told him she had gone to visit the brothers and tried to buy their ship, which made them so angry that they had beaten her. Then she added, "But you , you wretched coward, you won't avenge our shame! Now I know just how far from Greenland I am!"

Her husband woke up his men and told them to get their weapons. They went to the shed where the Icelanders were asleep and tied them up, and as each man was brought out of the shed Freydis had him killed. At last only five Icelandic women were left alive.

Freydis said, "Give me an axe."

One of the men gave her an axe and she murdered them.

'After this wicked deed,' says The Greenlanders' Saga, 'they went back to their houses, and it was clear that Freydis felt she had handled the matter very well. This is what she said to her companions: "If we get to Greenland I shall be the death of any man who reveals what took place. Our story will be that they stayed here after we left." '

Early in the spring they loaded the brothers' ship with as much as it could carry and sailed to Greenland. Freydis bribed everybody to insure silence and then returned to her farm. But Leif heard rumors of what had happened; he seized three of Freydis' men and tortured them until they confessed. When he learned the truth he said, "I do not have the heart to punish my sister Freydis as she deserves. But I prophesy that no good will come to her descendants."

And after that, we are told, 'no one thought anything but ill of her and her family.'

* * *

How many other Norse adventurers and colonists reached the American continent—either on purpose or by accident—is unknown. There must have been quite a few. Among the first was a certain Bjorn Asbrandsson who disappeared after leaving Iceland in the year 1000. The chronicles are not clear as to whether or not he was on his way to Greenland; but about twenty-five years later, according to the Eyrbyggja Saga, a merchant named Gudleif who set out from Dublin was blown far to the west by a gale and finally anchored in a cove of some unfamiliar land. There he and his crew were taken prisoner by a group of dark-featured natives, but were released after an old white man spoke on their behalf. This man identified himself to Gudleif as Bjorn Asbrandsson. He said he had been living with the natives for a long time and had no wish to go back to Iceland.

In 1059 a Celtic or Saxon priest named Jon is said to have undertaken a missionary voyage to Vinland where he was murdered.

In 1120 or 1121 the Bishop of Greenland, Eirik Gnupsson—or Upsi—'sailed in search of Vinland.' Or he sailed 'to visit' that country, depending on how *leitadi* is translated. Nothing more is heard of him, and presumably he did not return because three years later King Sigurd gave the bishopric to a cleric named Arnald.

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In 1226 the leaders of Greenland's eastern settlement, Eystribyggd, which Eirik the Red had founded, became greatly disturbed by the appearance of Eskimos. They sent an expedition into Davis Strait, which separates Greenland from Canada, with instructions to find out where the Eskimos were coming from and to learn, if possible, what their intentions might be. Cairns and shelters that have been discovered in the area indicate that these men traveled through the extreme north at least as far as Devon Island—about as far west as Chicago.

Further south, in the Vinland area, Norsemen were active as late as 1347, probably in the lumber trade. Says the *Flateyjarbók:* 'Came a ship from Greenland that had been to Markland, eighteen men on board.' With a bit more detail this same ship is reported in the *Skálholt* annals: 'Also there came a ship from Greenland, smaller than the small Icelandic boats, which put in at the outer Straumfjord and had no anchor. There were seventeen men on board. They had made a voyage to Markland but were afterwards storm-driven here.'

And there is a possibility that about this time the entire western settlement, or what was left of it—perhaps several hundred people—emigrated to America; because in 1350, plus or minus a year or two, a cleric named Ivar Bárdarsson found the settlement totally deserted except for some livestock. There were no signs of a struggle with Eskimos, which means the people must have left voluntarily. Eskimos may or may not have plundered the empty houses—Bárdarsson's report indicates that they did. Yet the presence of sheep, goats, horses, and cattle suggests that Eskimos had not been near the place, because they would have slaughtered the animals for food. If the Vikings did emigrate they must have taken aboard as many animals as their ships could carry and then crossed the strait to Canada, unless they headed for the North Pole.

A dozen theories have been offered as to what became of these people; each answers certain questions but fails to answer others. Anyway, the mystery of this deserted Christian outpost was one of the reasons King Magnus directed Poul Knudsson to find out what was what in that faraway place.

Knudsson sailed in 1355: 'We do this for the glory of God and our soul's salvation, and for those forefathers of ours who brought Christianity to Greenland. . .'

Nine years later several of Knudsson's men got back to Norway—and that is all we know. But the speculation is intense. Did some members of his party travel beyond Greenland? If so, how far? Did they travel through what is now Minnesota?

The basis for this last curious question is the Kensington runestone, which has roughly the shape and size and aspect of a substantial tombstone, and is covered with runic characters that tell the following story:

(We are) 8 Goths and 22 Norwegians on exploration journey from Vineland throughout the west. We had camp beside 2 skerries one day's journey north of this stone. We were out fishing one day. After we came home, found 10 men red with blood and dead. AV(e) M(aria) Deliver (us) from evil!

Have 10 men by the sea to look after our ship, 14 days' journey from this island. Year 1362.

On July 20th, 1909, a Minnesota farmer filed this deposition with the local notary public: 'I, Olof Ohman, of the town of Solem, Douglas County, Minnesota, being duly sworn. . .In the month of August, 1898, while accompanied by my son, Edward, I was engaged in grubbing upon a timbered elevation, surrounded by marshes, in the southeast corner of my land, about 500 feet west of my neighbor's, Nils Flaten's, house, and in the full view thereof. Upon removing an asp, measuring about 10 inches in diameter at its base, I discovered a flat stone inscribed with characters, to me unintelligible. The stone lay just beneath the surface of the ground in a slightly slanting position, with one corner almost protruding. The two largest roots of the tree clasped the stone in such a manner that the stone must have been there at least as long as the tree. . .I immediately called my neighbor's, Nils Flaten's, attention to the discovery, and he came over the same afternoon and inspected the stone and the stump under which it was found.

'I kept the stone in my possession for a few days; and then left it in the Bank of Kensington. . .'

Nils Flaten, who accompanied Ohman to the office of the notary, swore to his part in the discovery. This much can be verified, along with a few unimportant details. Beyond that, the inscribed stone has created as much controversy as if it were a representation of the Holy Grail.

* * *

Is it a fake, or not?

The runestone's leading advocate was Hjalmar Holand, a Norwegian-born Wisconsin cherry farmer who learned about it in 1907 while he was a student at the University of Wisconsin. He tried to buy it. He offered five dollars, but Ohman wanted ten. Holand could not afford ten. Ohman by this time had put up with a certain amount of ridicule because almost every geologist and philologist who examined the stone had concluded that the carving must be recent, and perhaps because of this he suddenly gave the stone to Holand.

For the next fifty-five years Holand tried to authenticate the grisly tale. He even took the stone to Scandinavia for examination. And there have been authorities in one field or another who agreed with him that it could not be a fraud. Most experts, however, look upon the Kensington stone with distaste, boredom, resignation and contempt.

Birgitta Wallace of the Carnegie Museum probably speaks for a majority: "The type of 'Scandinavian' language portrayed in the inscription in fact shows that the stone was carved by a Scandinavian settler in the American Middle West. This particular dialect developed in that region and is still spoken by the old-timers in the Kensington area but is unknown in other parts of the world. It is also obvious that the inscription was carved by someone with an embryonic knowledge of runes, but who lacked familiarity with medieval Scandinavian languages. The carver could have been almost any one of the early Scandinavian settlers in Minnesota, all of whom knew something about runes but who generally had no philological education. . .(the runes) were cut with a chisel with a regular one-inch bit, a variety commonly sold in American hardware stores."

No less celebrated than the Kensington artifact is the Newport tower, alleged to have been built by Knudsson's party either before or

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after they visited Minnesota, or by a still earlier Viking expedition. Or it was built by sixteenth century Portuguese explorers. Or perhaps by the governor of Rhode Island, Benedict Arnold—not *the* Benedict Arnold—shortly before 1677, the date it first appears in historical records. Those who believe in the authenticity of the Kensington runestone almost without exception believe in the Viking origin of the tower. And, naturally, vice versa.

Here is what we know for certain: it is a cylindrical stone structure approximately twenty-five feet high, with eight arches supported by columns. The walls are about two feet thick with traces of stucco coating. Only the shell of the tower remains, the interior wooden components having disintegrated. It became a proper subject for argument in 1839 after a Danish antiquarian said he thought it was a Norse church or baptistery, and that it had been built by Vinlanders of the eleventh or twelfth century.

True believers point to architectural similarities between the tower and medieval Scandinavian structures: segmental arches, double-splayed casement windows, etc. They mention a unit of measurement known as the 'Rhineland foot' which they say was used in the design of the tower, whereas all Colonial buildings used the English foot.

Skeptics reply that because of the tower's condition the unit of measurement cannot be determined. Besides, the Rhineland foot was still in use as late as the nineteenth century. Then, too, carefully supervised digging around the foundation has brought up such items as a gun-flint and a seventeenth century clay pipe.

"This is fourteenth century architecture," said a European archaeologist. "There would be no question as to its age if this were in Europe."

* * *

So the dispute continues.

Excluding some knickknacks from L'Anse aux Meadows, there is only one batch of indisputably Norse objects to have surfaced on the American continent. This is 'the Beardmore find', which consists of a broken sword, an axehead, a fragmentary horse rattle, and three scraps of iron. In the judgment of almost every specialist who has examined these relics they date from the latter part of the Viking Age—the sword from the tenth century, the axehead and rattle from the eleventh. They were found, according to one report, during dynamiting on a mining claim near Beardmore, Ontario. But another report says they were retrieved from the basement of a home in Port Arthur and that they were brought to Canada about fifty years ago. Both reports are substantiated by witnesses and by circumstantial evidence. Once again, therefore, you have an option.

All in all there are perhaps one hundred objects—along with a couple of dozen inscriptions and at least fifty sites—purporting to show that Vikings reached America. By far the most engaging artifacts are some rusty crescent-shaped little axes from the Great Lakes region, home of the embattled Kensington runestone. Because they are too light to be weapons they have been described as ceremonial halberds. It seems, however, that medieval halberds did not look exactly like that. It seems, too, that they were manufactured by the American Tobacco Company in the late nineteenth century for use as plug tobacco cutters—the business end of the little hatchet being attached to a cutting board by a hinge. They were given away during an advertising campaign to promote the sale of Battle-Axe Plug, and a good many housewives probably used them to chop onions and cabbage and garlic and so forth.

But still, Hjalmar Holand submitted one tobacco cutter and two of the halberds that he thought were medieval Norse to the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Wisconsin. Professor R. A. Ragatz, Chairman of the Department, examined all three and wrote to Holand: 'The metal (of the tobacco cutter) is a rather poor quality of gray cast iron, showing the following micro-constituents: graphite plates, ferrite, pearlite, steadite. The structure is totally different from the frames of the two genuine halberds. . .I can state positively that the two halberds sent me last fall were not of the same origin as the tobacco cutter recently submitted.'

Other disputed evidence of Viking tourists includes 'mooring holes' which have been found on Cape Cod and quite plentifully around the Minnesota lakes. These holes, about an inch in diameter and six or seven inches deep, have been drilled into boulders on the shores of past or present waterways. They are said to have been used for mooring a boat temporarily—a line from the boat being tied to an iron pin inserted in the hole. A sequence of such holes should indicate the route traveled; and it so happens that many of them have been discovered alongside northern rivers and lakes that eventually feed the Mississippi. Now, what this suggests is that Vikings may have traveled along the St. Lawrence to the Great Lakes, or south from Hudson Bay via the Nelson River into the Wisconsin-Minnesota area. From there they could have gone south indefinitely, very easily, as far as they cared to float, drifting at last into the Gulf of Mexico below New Orleans.

But here is Birgitta Wallace, archenemy of romantics: ". . .the method is unknown in Norse seamanship, medieval or modern. . . . Other stones with identical drillings in the immediate vicinity of the 'mooring holes' provide a clue as to what they really are; they are blasting holes drilled by the early settlers to split stone for foundations, and no hole has been proved to be older than 1860. Many of the stones were never dynamited for one reason or another."

Well, in that case we are left with nothing but L'Anse aux Meadows, which is either a grave disappointment or an exciting discovery, depending on your outlook. The name could mean the cove or bay with grass around it, or possibly Meadows is a corruption of Medusa—for the shoals of jellyfish found there during summer. Old sailing charts call it Méduse Bay, Jellyfish Bay. It is on the northernmost tip of Newfoundland, about the latitude of London, within sight of the Canadian mainland, and near this bay are the ruins of a Norse settlement. Carbon-14 tests give a date of approximately 1000 A.D.

Not much is left. There is the outline of a big turf-walled house—about fifty by seventy feet, containing five or six rooms—and the outlines of various smaller structures including a smithy, a bath-house, five boat sheds, a kiln, and two outdoor cooking pits.

Very few artifacts have survived, partly because there is so much acid in the soil. Almost everything made of bone or wood has disintegrated—whatever was not carried off by Eskimos, Indians, and early Newfoundland settlers. There are a few nails,

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mostly rust, a piece of copper with cross stripings that might have come from a belt, a whetstone, a bone needle, a bit of jasper, a stone lamp of the old Icelandic type, a steatite spindle whorl—meaning there were women in the house—and a bronze ring-headed pin. Pins of this type were used by Vikings to fasten their capes. And in the smithy was a large cracked flat-topped stone—the anvil—together with fragments of bog-iron, clumps of slag, and patches of soot.

The great house burned, says Dr. Helge Ingstad, who supervised the excavation, although it is impossible to say whether this happened by accident or design.

L'Anse aux Meadows must have been an agreeable place to live. There were fields of berries and flowers, huge salmon in the lake, herds of caribou—many more animals and birds than there are now. The sea was alive with cod, seals, and whales, and the weather probably was mild.

Then why was paradise abandoned? And why is there no sign of other settlements on Newfoundland, or further south?

The answer seems to be that these people arrived too soon. Europe was not ready to support them, and with only spears, axes, knives, and swords these few colonists could not hold out against the skraelings. Whether they were killed in one overwhelming raid, whether they intermarried with the natives, or perhaps moved further south, or at last gave up and retreated to Greenland—neither the ruins nor the old vellum manuscripts reveal.

It is certain, though, that they got this far on several occasions, and it would be exceedingly strange if they traveled no further. Even the most conservative archaeologists admit the possibility of Viking sites on the mainland.

A lump of coal discovered in a Greenland house hints very strongly at a voyage to Rhode Island. This house, which stood at the head of Ameralik fjord in the western settlement, probably belonged at one time to Thorfinn Karlsefni and his wife Gudrid. The coal was found deep in the ruins by Danish archaeologists, and there are two curious things about it. In the first place, there was only one lump—and nothing but wood-ash in the fireplace. And no other coal has been found anywhere in the Greenland ruins. Secondly, it is meta-anthracite, which does not occur anywhere in Greenland, nor anyplace along the east coast of North America except in Rhode Island.

* * *

What all of this means is that you are at liberty to follow the mooring holes of imagination as far as you care to. Through the St. Lawrence waterway, for example, to the Great Lakes and beyond. After all, nobody can prove that a party of Norse adventurers did not reach the Mississippi and follow it to the Gulf, and from there sail west, following the downward coast.

The Mexican Indian legend of Quetzalcoatl says that a bearded white man appeared out of the east on a raft of snakes and later departed in the direction from which he had come, promising to return in five hundred years. So you may imagine a Viking ship with a carved serpent head on the prow, with a fair-haired bearded Norwegian in command. And when five centuries had passed a bearded foreigner did arrive, not exactly commanding a raft of snakes, although many people swear he had a complement of snakes aboard. He was, of course, much darker than a Norwegian; and his name, Hernando Cortés, is not unfamiliar.

You will get a chilly reception from anthropologists if you attempt to relate Quetzalcoatl to a Viking, or any other such fabulous theory. But the alternative is to join the conservatives, in which case you will have to be satisfied with a spindle whorl, a bone needle, and some furnace slag. □

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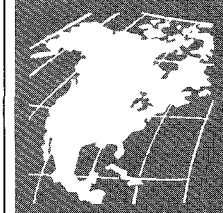

. . . another man's poison

Kenneth Lash:

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Not Quite a Letter to Saul Bellow

People have been no damn good lately. Which is to say they have been other than me. I've had to write them a lot of letters, in the moments before sleeping, in the moments after waking. My bed is full of words, sentences, hard verbs. I don't see them rising on currents of air as Chaucer did, to float eternally in air. They're too heavy. More apt to act as Byron saw the poet Southey's, warning him to avoid any risk of falling into water while carrying a book of his own poems, the weight of which would sink him like a stone.

Since the words in these letters are neither written (that's work) nor mailed (that's suicide) I wonder about their level of existence. Are they, mentally formed in full shape — I'm not slipshod about it—foetuses? Am I involved in the right-to-live movement? Will Phyllis Schlafly be rapping at my door? I wrote her a letter the other night about 11:30 telling her Anita Bryant was in difficulty because the Sunkist ad agency was proposing a campaign of four-color ads featuring a kindly old picker in an orange grove saying, "I never met a fruit I didn't like."

Or am I involved in higher questions, Pirandello-like questions of a related group of sentences restlessly and relentlessly demanding their right, once created, to be brought properly onto paper? If this is so, and that's what they're doing there in my bed, or about to do, then clearly I am headed toward a classic case of insomnia. A very high-level case. Strindbergian. Kierkegaardian. In any event, well past Sartre.

The heart (rhyme placement can be amusing) of my problem lies with others. As is usual with all of us. In this particular case the wicked soul is Saul Bellow. It used to be James Joyce—who at the very time I was as a sophomore perfecting my punning, published *Finnegan's Wake*. Wrote it and published it, thereby condemning me and my puns to a lifetime of at best distinguished amateurism. As a punster I am more than a dilettante, less than an artist, and it is history I have to thank for that. Just as I have to thank it for *Herzog*.

And I have been a friend to Saul Bellow! Way back in—my god—1955 when the Rockefeller Foundation sent me (me-as-editor) circling around Latin America to meet writers and painters and musicians I would always say "Saul Bellow" when they asked me which new North American

writer they should read. And, as I told Jorge Luis Borges, to drop the name of a man so extraordinary, so incomparably generous, I didn't like *Augie March* so much but I felt the presence of a hell of a writer behind it. Anyway, I went along to eight or nine countries crying Saul Bellow Saul Bellow like advance man for a carnival. And for many long years the carnival didn't arrive, despite repeated promises. And then came *Herzog*.

Vindicated at last. And betrayed. In the selfsame act. In the selfsame book to reveal we were cousins, and to cut me off from all claims to the family inheritance.

He writes letters in his incessant head! *He* doesn't mail them! Instead he, Saul Bellow, gets hold of a front man, Herzog, and not only gets him to mail the whole goddamned bunch of letters but to mail them to a few hundred thousand people. All at once and without licking an envelope. And instead of committing social suicide by sending such letters he gets a Nobel Prize.

Never mind Jewish. The situation is Greek. I wrote him last year to warn that I am fitting out a fleet, that I have called the kings together. In his response, which is somewhere down near the foot of my bed, he disclaims all responsibility. As a rabbi, he says, he is separated from ambitions such as mine though he understands them. Understanding, however, is not to be confused with sympathy. Not even with empathy, despite the crooked words of his colleagues in the dusty department of English at the University of Chicago. He accuses me—my claiming of cousinhood—of sentimentalism, of a senti-mentality, which he also understands since it has long been evident that the Jews are a universal stomach. They feel everything; even their prayers are moans. I would do well to look outside myself, *feel* outside myself. Take buses.

Easy for him to say. He's rich and famous. What kind of state is that for a rabbi? Hey? Hey Saul?

I'll give him letters.

* * *

Trying to Keep Up with Houston McTear: He recently defeated Harvey Glance among others while setting a world-record for the 60-yard dash. Indoors, I believe.

* * *

How airlines get people to behave like compliant cattle is a secret which I hope is not transferable to governments, though life-via-air feels much like that inside a Kafka bureaucracy. However, a recent concern for passenger comfort (i.e., demand) has brought into being the non-smoking section aboard aircraft. I suggest a

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further step, one which will abet both comfort and revenue: a soundproof compartment for children under three, outfitted with a pacifier tree, rubber toys, and courtesy Pampers stencilled with the name of the airline. First-class fares will apply. Infants are not tourists.

* * *

The precipitous decline of patriotism continues. It is no longer even the last refuge of scoundrels. Religion is. Eh, Charles Colson, John Erlichman, Bert Lance, Larry Flynt, and other assorted hustlers?

* * *

On the authority of a native of the Tennessee Valley (upper Cumberland region), there are three kinds of people in the world: "Those who make things happen, those who watch it happen, and those who never know whatinhell's happening."

Another authority said to me recently: "I've stopped the heavy thinking. It makes you smarter than the people around you, and dumber than the person you're going to be at the time of dying." I don't know what it means, but it sounds like a piece of heavy thinking to me.

* * *

Ken Gogel, a garden-variety authority, passed on to me a copy of *The Cactus Journal.* In it, I found the following information: "In 1929 Scott Haselton began the *Journal* and published and edited it until his recent retirement without missing a single issue in 37 years, nor changing its policy or format. This is a world's record for a specialized magazine and its stability is assured. It has weathered all storms including wars and depressions. . . ." The cactus and its *Journal*—a stubborn, dignified couple in a deciduous world.

* * *

I don't much like museums, galleries, all the jails and marble closets in which we keep our facts and artifacts. Mostly I don't like them because they force people to experience things out of context. Thus the experience is cramped if not in fact crooked. And there's always that aerosol mist of possession for its own sake.

Here and there, whether because of the works being less "exhibited" than existing in a living space (the Frick in New York), or because the materials aim primarily at providing an ongoing experience rather than showing themselves off (the national anthropological museum in Mexico City), a museum really works.

There's a relative newcomer in that high company, a museum that doesn't just stand out, it glows: the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. Its theme is the history of flight, its exceptional success is that it invites you not simply to see this history but to feel it.

Walk through the door and there, smack in front of you, is Apollo 11. The real thing, right there on the floor where you can touch it. Don't you think you would? It's been to the moon. Just sitting there, quietly, it's at once more real and more difficult to believe than the newspaper and TV accounts. (Michael Collins, who was commander of the craft, is curator of this museum. They kept doing things right.)

When you look up from Apollo 11 into a five-story space you see a fantasy collection of airplanes hanging like models from strings. But they're not models. They're the real Wright Brothers' Flyer, Lindbergh's "Spirit of St. Louis," Ford's Tri-Motor, Eastern Airlines' silver-riveted DC-3 of the '30s (first transcontinental service). Spaced here and there among them is an assortment of open-cockpit planes, biplanes, early mail planes. Beyond you can make out a collection of World War II fighter planes. (Elsewhere there are Spads, Nieuports, Fokkers, planes to gladden the heart of Snoopy.)

This is the Milestones of Flight Gallery. Beyond at one end is a gallery where you can stand aboard a simulated aircraft carrier as it is called into action; at the other end you can walk slowly through a space platform. The scale is necessarily large (the Skylab orbital workshop is the size of a three-bedroom house), but through a combination of crowded variety on the one hand and different viewing levels on the other it never seems to dwarf you. The space is never unfriendly. Quite the opposite, roaming around among it tickles you, as at a great Fair. I wished for a moment to be small, holding onto someone's hand, exclaiming at this, climbing through that.

Off the main gallery are various rooms, small and of different shapes, with occasional winding paths between and around, full of surprises—an exhibit of balloon history, a small round room by Charles Eames in which you may sit in the dark for a few terrestrial minutes and watch a silent film demonstrating the distortions of time as a space capsule rushes in geometric progressions of speed away from the earth. A history of the helicopter (in the Vertical Flight Gallery) includes drawings by Leonardo da Vinci. Everywhere is variety of space, scale, color, sound. One doesn't tire. You know how museums tire? Ever watch your compatriots droop out of the Pitti Palace? Stumble out of cathedrals?

This is in fact a cathedral, where if flight is not worshipped overtly it is hymned. But it is not sermoned. For example the walk in, around, and through it should be capped by attending its theater, in which a 28-minute film is shown, called "To Fly." And though there is talk, the film—opening with yourself in the basket of a balloon dipping in a sudden downdraft over New England hills—gets you by the guts and never lets go. It seats you at a steep angle and towers a five-story screen up over your head. At moments I wished for a seat belt. It's overwhelming. As is flight.

The Air and Space Museum is on the Mall, across from the National Gallery, at 7th and Independence Ave. Opened just before the July 4, 1976, celebration it is part of the great Smithsonian Institution. And it is a smash hit; 3,000,000 people went to it in the first few months. Why not? It celebrates and records like a great Lascaux Cave a pivotal achievement in the history of the human as a being utterly involved in death, mystery, and triumph.

To fly! Achieved, how many thousands of years after the human stared so hard and so longingly at the flight of birds that it became a design of experience comprehended in the dreams of us all. But now, now even the birds fall back, as we drop our wings and fly where birds have no image. If it can be called flight. Is "flying" what a space capsule does? The air part of the Air and Space Museum is a true museum, a repository for ways and means of the past. The space part is an early drawing of a picture not yet fully imagined. A capsule. Ungainly, dripping with a spaghetti of wires, seats like dentist's chairs, old-timey toggle switches. Crudely forcing their way into space. A kind of brutal harnessing for a voy-

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age. But the voyage is to the stars. Do you believe that yet? I mean really, in your bones?

* * *

Annals of Art, #1: Just before World War I, when Yorkville, the German neighborhood in Manhattan, was not a traitorous place to be seen in, it was a popular destination for a Sunday outing. Aside from fresh air the object was to fetch for the Sunday table comestibles: brats, wursts, schnitzels; lager and *kuchen*. Especially *kuchen*. And especially among these the crisp, almost sugarless *stieglitz*—free-form cookies of every imaginable shape and color. They became world-renowned when a child, as children will, opened a dark cookie jar surreptitiously and removed a few *stieglitz*, quickly shutting the jar again. It happened that this particular batch of cookies was covered with those little silver beads that bakers use. As luck would have it, these particular cookies were being saved against an occasion—the visit of an uncle, which was several times postponed. When at last the personage arrived, had been welcomed, seated, and prepared for refreshment, the mother of the house, taking down the jar of *stieglitz* to arrange them on the Dresden china, found the jar half empty. Dismayed, she called her husband into the kitchen. He denied guilt or even complicity. The two of them turned deep red and summoned young Fritzi to the kitchen. He too denied all and turned red. The mother tore at her hair, gestured helplessly at the china plate, not even fully covered with *stieglitz*. The father (now Jurgen, soon to be Jack) looked at the plate. Suddenly he looked closer, picked up two of the *stieglitz*. He grunted a great grunt. There—grainy, imperfect, yet decipherable to a suspecting eye—was the photograph of a hand superimposed on the surface of silvery beads. It was a small hand. The *stieglitz* were discarded, Fritzi went without dinner, the uncle was taken to Luchow's for roast goose, at some expense. The outing was topped off by a tot of schnapps at O'Keeffe's, a neighborhood saloon despite the unlikely name, which had resulted from a mixed marriage. It was a staunch, well-ordered place, popular among the quieter classes. It featured fresh flowers at the tables and served excellent herring, sandwiches, and of course *stieglitz*. □

Dennis Trudell: FATHER

I have been learning what the word means
for ten years now. No, for thirty-nine.
My father built me a cardboard fort;
I remember a cloud . . . cardboard clouds . . .
We each have two sons; we each
have a mustache. When my first son was born,
I stayed awake all night, smoking.
When he learned to talk, I grew a mustache.
When he learned to read, I looked
at my father and saw a gray bird the size
of a cathedral behind his eyes, sulking.

The bird has flapped wings and dug in talons,
glazing my father's eyes twice now
in my presence. My younger son can read.
After he was born, I quit a career
and this morning I have a chill of fear
that I may waste my life. My father
retired five months before I first
saw his eyes glaze over; he didn't
know where he was, but it hurt.
He didn't want to be there; he looked
around the room, mumbling about past mistakes.
My brother and I held him; it was Christmas Eve
and our children played happily under the tree.

Now my father has moved to this city.
What was it I had to give him?
I painted streets on a broad rectangle
of wallboard one Christmas for my first son.
He still plays with it. He sees me
smoke marijuana . . . He said I know
what you guys were doing in there,
you were mating. *Mating.* I say
"fuck" in front of my parents, who need me too much
to let the forms of movement our generations
were allowed to come between us.

My father had a world war to win,
and he did. He drew airplanes
that flew in the real, unmargined sky.
My younger son loves him. My older
son loves him and has other things to do
than think much about either of us.
The gray bird still hovers there,
between the halves of my father's heart.
In one of them he is a little boy
again. He is wondering what all this
onslaught of time is about.
He is looking around for his father.
Last night my older son stayed overnight
in another town; I doubt that he missed me.

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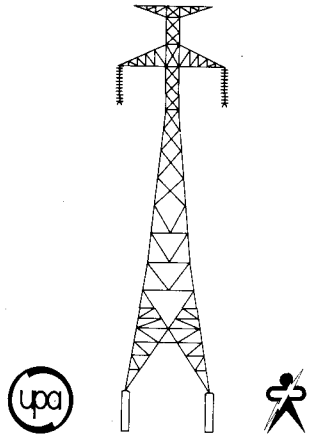
ANYBODY WANT A COPY OF MY PRAYER?



A MATTER OF POWER

by Leo J. Hertzel

Perhaps four-hundred people are gathered here on the steps of the state capitol building in Saint Paul. On such massive-wide steps a crowd of four-hundred looks very small, four-hundred backed up against the state of Minnesota, the slabs of Georgia marble, the columns behind and the golden horses rearing above. Today is November 16. It is shortly after twelve noon. A raw early winter wind blows around under a gray sky. The people gathered on the steps seem ill at ease, self conscious. From time to time a person in the crowd turns and says something to someone nearby. A person looks around and then moves awkwardly a step or two forward or back. Occasionally someone holds up a sign above the heads of the group so that the news photographers who wait on the edges for something to happen can read it and maybe photograph it. The signs rise and fall slowly above the heads:

GOD IS ON OUR SIDE
FARMING IS EVERYBODY'S
BREAD & BUTTER
WE HAVE NOT YET BEGUN TO FIGHT
WE DO NOT WANT TO BE HUMAN GUINEA PIGS
FOOD COMES FROM THE FARMERS
OUR LAND IS OUR LIVELIHOOD
PROTECT PRIME FARMLAND
THE PEOPLE ARE ON THE LINE
NSP—NOISY STINKY POWER
I'M FOR FARMLAND

The crowd is a mixed group of colors and shapes. A child in a black snowsuit with a white fur hood around her face stands beside a round man in a snug, belted snowmobile suit. One gray woman has a silky green ski jacket buttoned all the way to her neck. A bearded man in a windbreaker and army jeans wears an Australian bush hat at the proper angle. Bareheaded, an old man in a long brown overcoat stands in galoshes.

The focal point of the crowd at this moment is a heavy, bent man wearing an open blowing tweed overcoat and a soft gray fedora that looks to be too large for his head. He has a tape recorder strapped over his shoulder. He is stooped facing the crowd, bent over talking into a microphone held by an assistant who wears a leather cap with the ear flaps down. The man talking into the microphone is excited, and he reads from a paper with sweeping gestures of the arms that cause his overcoat to blow full out behind him. Perhaps the public address system is faulty. His voice is lost in the constant wind. The crowd remains quiet, patiently flashing signs from time to time. It waits. Having finished speaking, the man at the microphone reaches inside his overcoat pocket and pulls out a handful of papers. "Anybody want a copy of my prayer?" he yells, looking eagerly towards the newsmen and photographers. "I have copies of the prayer here!" he yells again, shoving the papers toward the crowd.

The papers the man passes out are Xerox copies of a prayer he has just read. The prayer is typed in capital letters:

ALMIGHTY AND MOST GRACIOUS GOD!
WE ASK THY SPECIAL BLESSING ON

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THESE THY HUMBLE CHILDREN IN THIS AN HOUR OF TRAVAIL FOR THEM.

BLESS THE GOVERNOR, THE LEGISLATURE AND THE AGENCIES CREATED BY THEM WITH THY INFINITE WISDOM SO THEY MAY SERVE THY CHILDREN AS THOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO.

BLESS THE COURTS OF OUR LAND, O GOD, THAT THEY MAY LEVEL JUSTICE ACCORDING TO THY HOLY WORD.

MAY OUR PUBLIC SERVANTS BE EVER MINDFUL, DEAR FATHER, THAT OUR WISE AND COURAGEOUS FOREFATHERS FOUNDED THIS NATION "WITH A FIRM RELIANCE ON THE PROTECTION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND WITH A MUTUAL PLEDGE TO EACH OTHER OF THEIR LIVES, THEIR FORTUNES AND THEIR SACRED HONOR. . . ."

PLEASE! O GOD, HEAR OUR SUPPLICATION THAT THIS GOVERNMENT CONCEIVED IN PAIN, SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE MAY CONTINUE TO SERVE OUR PEOPLE AS THOU WOULD HAVE IT.

AMEN

At the bottom of the prayer is a stamped name: *H. Henry Southworth, 210 River St., Paynesville, Minn. 56362.*

Like a group of bored school children on a field trip, the crowd continues to shift about carefully on the capitol steps. A man wearing a clerical collar is now speaking into the microphone. Very tall, gaunt, hollow cheeks, trying to smile broadly while talking, he leans toward the crowd. ". . . Saint Paul Church in Sauk Center . . . we are concerned, Oh Lord, . . . health hazards and power lines . . . Oh Lord, electric shocks while riding tractors . . . and fences electrified . . . man even had to have his little daughter's swing set grounded by power company . . . in the east. . . ." The public address system has improved and fragments of this prayer blow about in the wind.

A few minutes earlier, just at twelve noon and before the prayers, the crowd had sung together. Without much volume, their voices joined together in "Hard Power," words by a man from Saint Peter, Minnesota, named Wendell Bradley, melody the familiar "ain't it hard . . . ain't it hard . . . ain't it hard."

Well the first time we saw the power company
they had a paper in their hand.
Well the next time we saw that power company
they had come to take our land. Chorus.

Well the next time we saw the power company
they had withdrawn their siting crew.
Well the last time we saw that power company
all their plans had fallen through. Chorus.

Now, after the praying by the minister from Sauk Center, the crowd moves to the top of the steps and on into the capitol building, flashing signs as they go. Many of the people smile reassuringly at a lone blue-uniformed

MRS. MIKE FUCHS
called as a witness, having been
duly sworn, testified as follows:

MRS. FUCHS: I have a letter that I would like to go through. I have several letters but I would like to read mine. My name is Mrs. Mike Fuchs, Lake George Township, Stearns County, section eighteen. First of all I should explain why I oppose this route. It was pushed to North Fork and Lake George from the Bonanza Valley, before it went to the EQC. I got a copy of the Bonanza Valley Steering committee resolutions here stating that they should go southeasterly direction on the Glacial till soils. Resolution was passed July 23, 1974, in Brooten, Minnesota. I have a copy of that. The power company's second route would have hit Virgil Fuchs, our son's home place. The power company chose to reroute for the third time now hitting Mike Fuchs, Werner Fuchs and Virgil Fuchs other farm. This I say is suspicious. This Bi-Centennial year, two hundred years ago, it was the agricultural people who fought and won our freedom. There is nobody in this room that can guarantee no ill effects of these high voltage lines. Nevertheless, only time will tell all the effects of this line. Just lately there were some foreign countries that woke up the United States to the danger of red dye in food. Of course, this is rather a simple solution. The United States just stopped the use of it. Now listen to this. Russian scientists have discovered ultrahigh voltage power lines cause organ, blood and nerve damage, in the Enquirer. I have a copy of that. No doubt there will be plenty of ill effects. These young farmers and old alike who bought their farms without the inconvenience of big power lines, they improved their land, are proud and are happy with their land. I would say it would depreciate our farm probably as much as fifty percent. Our farm has a county road to the north, a township road to the east, a railroad running from northeast to southwest through our farm. By the way, this train should be hauling coal. About twelve acres of swamp, a deep ditch northwest to southeast joining the idle railroad thus making it a paradise for wildlife. So you see all that it would take is a big power line yet. We had all our oats seeded by plane last spring, also our corn sprayed. And our type of soil in wet years, this is the solution. And we are told the high voltage line is extremely dangerous. I feel it is no disgrace to fight for our land and personal rights and by no means for selfish interest. I need not say more as it will bring ill effects to erect towers against the will of the farmer.

Who knows – maybe life and surely liberty and pursue [sic] of happiness. Pick up your stock piles and go underground if you must and let us keep our freedom and our land in production. Keep Minnesota beautiful.

By the way, in yesterday's St. Cloud Times is a write-up about Ames, Iowa successfully using garbage to make electricity and they had heat and light from garbage since September of this year, for forty-five thousand people. That is the perfect solution. And there is a prospect that St. Cloud will do the same. I think that's the right thing and let the farmer stay in production.

Testimony of Mrs. Mike Fuchs before Minnesota Environmental Quality Board Hearing, Paynesville. April, 1976.

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capitol guard who returns the smiles and points the way to Room 4, a ground floor press conference room. Moving toward Room 4 through the ornate rotunda under the pastel light from windows far above, most of the men keep on their hats or caps that say INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER or CATERPILLAR in Day-glo yellow. Some of the women take off their wind jackets or ski jackets and the name tags underneath appear: MARTHA FRELAND, CIRCUIT BREAKERS, INC., SACRED HEART, MINNESOTA; GLORIA WOIDA, CURE, SAUK CENTER.

Room 4 was probably designed to seat 150 people with comfort. There is a square speaker's table under strong lights at one end. Irregular rows of chairs and benches face the table. Now the room fills with perhaps three hundred people filing in, glancing toward the table, choosing seats, removing wraps, getting settled. Ten or twelve people gather around the table. Reporters and photographers stand behind, the photographers occasionally pointing their cameras toward the crowd, panning the crowd, then moving back toward someone sitting at the table. The meeting that was cold and windy and raw outside is now hot and humid inside. The air is heavy and moist.

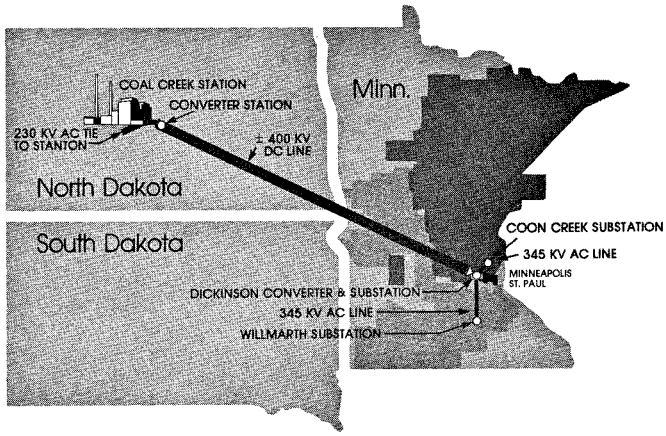
Nearly all of the people crowded into this room are acquainted with one another. They talk and laugh and wave at new people coming in. It is all good-natured. Confident and self-satisfied, this group creates no feel of threat.

A small young man with unruly black hair to his shoulders sits in an army fatigue jacket in the front row of chairs, awkwardly holding a piece of cardboard nearly five feet long. It is a sign reading HOW MUCH WILL IT COST? Each time the news cameras cover the audience, the man struggles to hold up his sign with its all-purpose message, jostling people to his left and right. After a while a man on the sign holder's right begins to help by supporting one end of the sign. The next time cameras pan by, both men stand and hold up the sign together.

The room is totally full. Something begins happening at the table in front. A trim, motherly woman in a dark flowered dress, with black hair pulled back tightly from her face, stands up near the front of the room, looks toward the back rows, and yells. "Virgil, get your butt up here! Get your butt up here before it starts!"

Nearly all of the people in this room are farmers. They have come to their state capitol by chartered buses from places like Granite Falls, Sauk Center, Willmar, Paynesville, Litchfield, Lowry, Saint Peter, Glenwood, Belgrade—all small farming centers in south and west central Minnesota. They have come peacefully to protest to officials of the government of Minnesota the building of high voltage lines that will bring enormous amounts of electrical power into Minnesota from two huge generating plants now under construction in North Dakota. These people are protesting the construction of great spidersteel towers on their farmland, towers to support the power lines, towers that would be located four to a mile on a line through west-central Minnesota, across some of the richest farm land in the North Country. Some of the people here today are here also to protest the construction of huge coal burning power plants in rural areas south of the metropolitan Minneapolis-Saint Paul district. Mostly, though, they are here to voice peaceful but very determined opposition to the construction of the line in from North Dakota, a line all of them both fear and hate. For

General overview of the entire project now under construction. Power companies hope the first generating unit at the Coal Creek complex will be in operation in November, 1978.



these people, the proposed eight hundred kilovolt power line that would carry day and night a thousand million watts of electricity over their fields and near their homes and barns is a frightening unknown. They believe it is a threat to their way of life, their livelihood, their own health and safety. Despite reassurances from the electrical cooperatives constructing the line that high voltage lines present no known dangers to health or growth, the farmers continue to ask, How Much Will It Cost? They believe rural people and their land are being sacrificed to the greed for more and more energy in the cities. "If the cities need more power," one farmer says, "let 'em put up the plants in the cities."

Gloria Woida of Sauk Center is important in the anti-power line forces. An impressive woman in her mid-thirties, self-assured, her hair swirled high on her head, wearing heavy rimmed glasses and heavy gold earrings, she talks to a reporter.

"Mrs. Woida, what are the main issues here today between the farmers and the power cooperatives trying to bring this line in from North Dakota?"

"The health and safety angles of this line. When you're told that you cannot refuel a tractor, a gas tractor, or anything gas underneath this line, when you're told that all your steel buildings have to be grounded, or when you're told that out in Ohio the farmers that work around the 765 line have to wear grounding chains, when you're told that you'll get used to living with shocks, they're no greater than that of an electric fence, or that you won't have any radio or you won't have any TV because the interference will be tremendous but we'll try to do something about it, I think we have reasons to protest."

"Mrs. Woida, what will you and your people do if your protests here today don't bring about an end to the construction of the lines?"

"We'll do whatever it takes to stop them, I guess."

Behind the table at the front of Room 4 is Wendell Bradley, one of the organizers of today's protest. Bradley is an environmentalist, a farmer, and a professor at Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter. He is prime mover in an organization called The Coalition of Rural Environmental Groups, CO:REG. He has a little, pointed, semi-satanic beard. He is wearing an old orangebrown sweater and jeans under a green ski jacket. He has a youthful face that is both sharper and hollower than most of the round, well-fed faces in today's crowd. Bradley doesn't move like the farmers in the room. His actions are too quick, too

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abrupt. He looks and acts more like a nervous professor, one of the generation of professors who learned their trade in the early 1960s and learned to look a bit like something else while retaining enough of the academic style to maintain prestige to fall back on when they need to fall back. "We're up at this capitol to give some of these paper people in their paper world a chance to see what real farmers look like," Bradley says.

At Bradley's left and right sit others prominent in the protest. Behind them are a United States flag and a Minnesota state flag. The press people begin to ask questions.

BRADLEY: *I've never had a press conference like this before. . . . All right, we're asking for a moratorium on all new power lines and power plants. Maybe we want them stopped forever, at least until they are proven safe. . .. We want a total reassessment of the whole problem. . . . We want the people involved. . . . We're here today to let the governor and the legislature know that farmers won't sit still and see the power companies destroy our land and threaten our health and our safety with these high voltage lines and these big new generating plants.*

REPORTER: *Do you have any specific proposals as alternates to present plans?*

BRADLEY: *We don't have all the answers. Well, alternate sources of power. Wind. Solar.*

REPORTER: *What will you do if the state refuses to go along with your proposal? What if the cooperatives go ahead and build this high voltage line?*

BRADLEY: *We don't know yet. There are a lot of things to consider.*

Bradley leaves the chair and his place is taken by a series of speakers. Each speaker reads a resolution or makes a statement.

"I represent SELF, concerned citizens organized to Save the Environment and Land for the Future. Our organization has unanimously passed the following resolution:

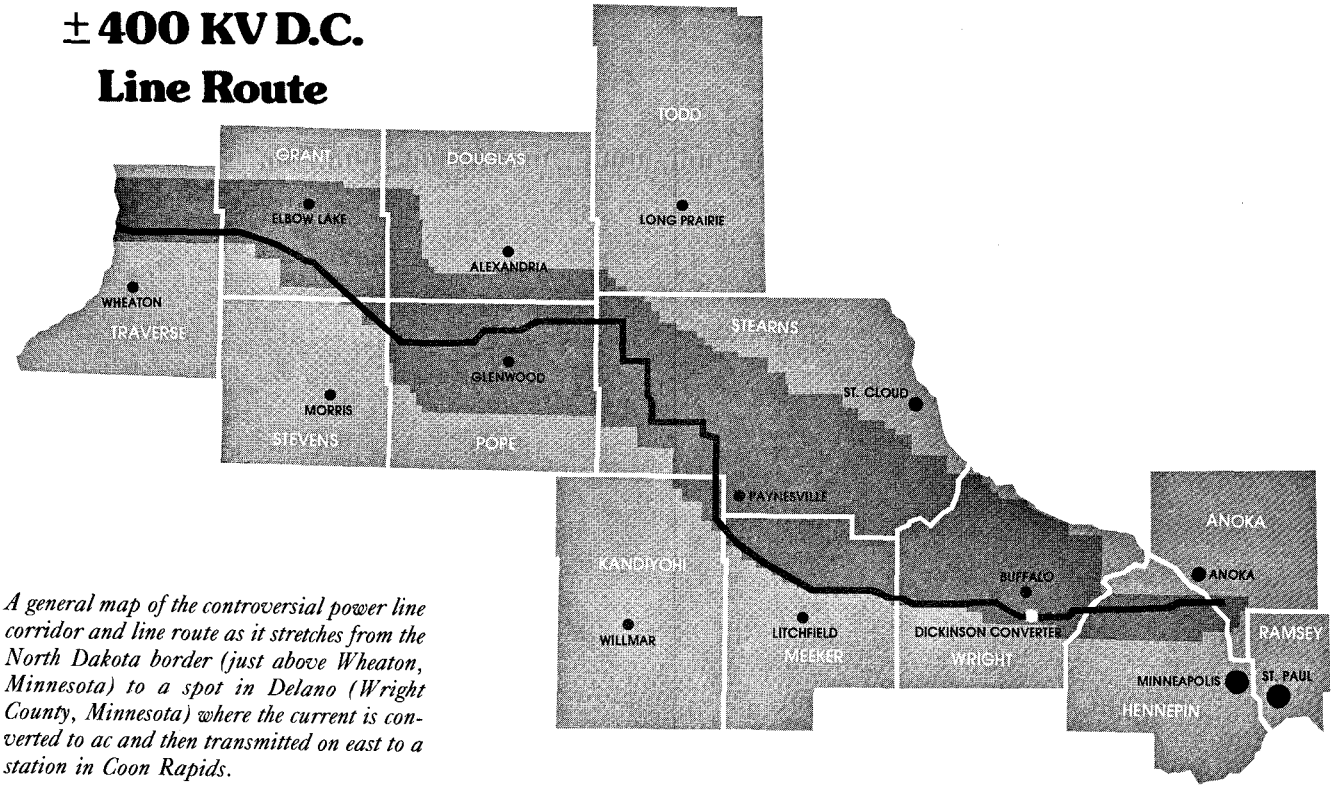
> SELF is concerned about the effect the pollution from the coal burning plants will have on human health, animal health and on vegetation. We feel that these emissions present significant potential health and welfare hazards for which there is inadequate control and insufficient data. The effect of the High Voltage Transmission Lines on humans has not been adequately tested. Therefore we ask that a moratorium be declared on the construction of all power plants and H.V.T.L.s until this study can be completed. We do not want our families to become human guinea pigs!"

"Save Our Countryside, SOC, Carolyn Koudella, President, has authorized the following statement:

> We call for a moratorium on the construction of the UPA-CPA 800 kilovolt power line from Underwood, N.D. to Delano, Minnesota, and all other such high voltage power lines, until a comprehensive, independent, impartial health and safety study is completed. We also call for an end to the legal intimidation and harassment being used by the utilities against the farmers."

"Families Are Concerned Too makes its position clear:

> FACT believes that utilities should not take property in the way they have done or be allowed to harass, arrest, or sue the property owner when he protests.
>
> We feel the procedure for the powerline routing should be modified to allow lines to be routed a safe distance from farm building sites. Also diagonal crossing of farm fields should be avoided.
>
> We feel the health issue is the most important issue and



A general map of the controversial power line corridor and line route as it stretches from the North Dakota border (just above Wheaton, Minnesota) to a spot in Delano (Wright County, Minnesota) where the current is converted to ac and then transmitted on east to a station in Coon Rapids.

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that there should be a comprehensive health and safety study done before any further construction is allowed to take place on this UPA-CPA 800,000 volt power line."

The statements go on for perhaps half an hour. As many women as men come to the microphone and speak or read. Old and conservative careful or young muscular with children following, they speak in voices uniformly mild and steady, often reading statements in a slow monotone. Rarely is there a threat of harsher measures than orderly protest. Only once does a speaker raise her voice. A handsome, sturdy woman with hair twisted atop her head shakes her fist in the air and, in a somewhat shaky voice, cries into the microphone, "We are peaceful people. Do the courts want us to be otherwise?" There is very light, scattered applause.

As a farmer in southwest Minnesota, I'd like to say that there is no moral justification for the type of action and harrassment brought against our friends in central Minnesota by these power companies.

This governor has got to be something more than just a light bulb.

It is difficult to see how any compromise position can continue to support eminent domain. It was once argued that during the time of rapid expansion in our nation, certain social expediencies were acceptable. As such, eminent domain met little widespread resistance. In this new era when unlimited expansion is over and uncontrolled growth is recognized as a serious environmental threat, eminent domain has become anachronistic.

My husband is being sued for five hundred thousand dollars by these power companies. Have you *ever been sued for five hundred thousand dollars?*

The photographers are leaving. The people assembled in Room 4 are getting their things together, looking for scarves, looking for children, making lunch plans. Some of them are going directly upstairs to repeat their protests and demands before some interested legislators. Some hope even to get to the governor.

"I'll say this to you. It's my opinion that that line's never going to carry any juice. There's too many people excited about this thing. Somebody will go out there one of these days with a high power rifle and. . . ."

Wendell Bradley goes about the room passing out copies of the CO:REG resolution calling for a moratorium on all large electric generating plants and transmission lines.

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING, CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF PAYNESVILLE

(July 14, 1975)

Jim Clowes presented information on the new power line corridor proposed to go through this area. After discussing this with the council, the following resolution was introduced by Councilman Peteler.

'RESOLUTION'
(opposing application of C.P.A. & U.C.P.A. for D.C. Line)

1. The corridor proposed for consideration of a Direct Current Power Line for the Cooperative Power Association and the United Cooperative Power Association which is within the vacinity [sic] of the city of Paynesville includes some of the most furtile [sic] farm land in the State of Minnesota. This Council believes that such a use of this land is unwarranted, wasteful and a definite threat to the future agricultural productivity of the area.

2. Considering the dollar value of this land and the dollar value of its productivity, the proposed easement payment to the farmer land owner is entirely inadequate when compared to the loss of income that will ensue.

3. The threat of potential danger to the environmental health and safety of the community is an unknown factor. Thus far it has not been established beyond the reasonable doubt that such a line will not pose both a present and future hazzard [sic] to the health and welfare of the communities affected.

4. The ugly appearance of the structures far exceeds that of billboard and similar eyesores which have been prohibited or are in the process of being eliminated from the landscape.

5. The credibility of the power interests seeking this line has not established sufficient confidence in us to warrant an acceptance of their claims for an immediate need for such a line.

6. Giving consideration to the proved capacity of American technology it is wholly conceivable that the necessary advancement in such technology to enable the building of such a line underground, where it belongs, is within the realm of engineering possibility and economic feasibility within the not too distant future. The granting of a permit to build this line above ground at the present time could be a distinct deterrent, or encourage the delay, in more rapid progress to achieve the building underground as soon as might other wise be done.

Therefore, the City Council of the City of Paynesville, Minnesota, requests the Minnesota Environmental Control Council to reject this application.

The foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Councilman Thielen and passed unanimously.

Adopted by the Council this 14th day of July, 1975.

s/s _____
H. Henry Southworth, Mayor

s/s _____
Donald W. Jacobson, City Clerk

Paynesville, Minnesota, is a town of about two thousand citizens located in south-central Stearns County. The controversial power line would cut lengthwise through this county, going a bit north of Paynesville. According to the state agriculture department, the county has nearly four thousand farms averaging just under two hundred acres each. The land is gently rolling fields with rivers and vacation lakes. Citizens of Paynesville say that Stearns is the richest dairy county in the state. Certainly the roads and highways at all times of year are heavily used by pickup trucks and tractors and mammoth pieces of self-propelled farm machinery resting on flatbed trucks or trailers going from dealer to farmer. Many farmers throughout the county have installed expensive irrigation systems that have dramatically increased productivity and profits. More and more farmers are seeding their fields by

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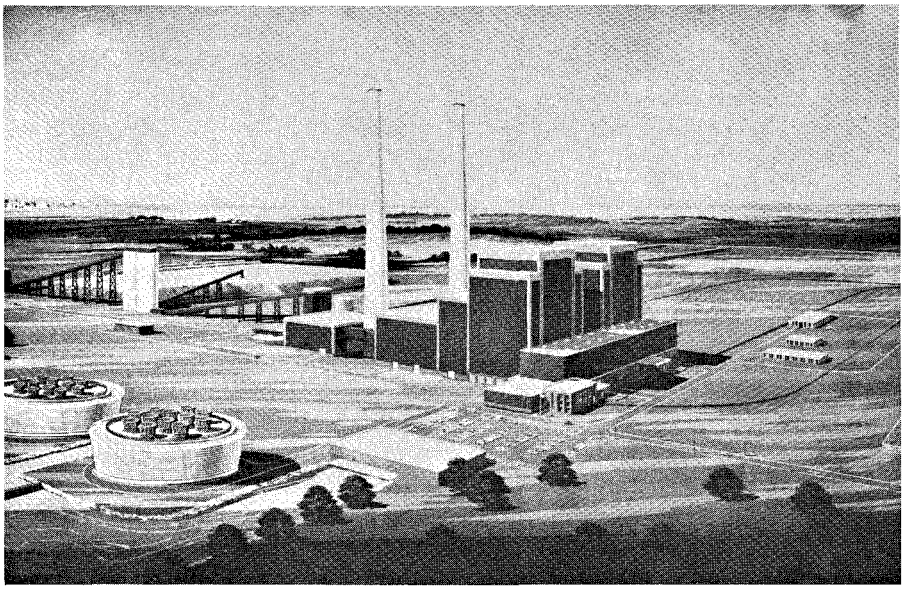

Drawing of the Coal Creek generating plant now under construction on a 2,560 acre site five miles south of Underwood, North Dakota. If Minnesota Cooperative Power Associations' plans are realized, this plant will supply huge amounts of electrical power to central and southern Minnesota. The power would travel over a transmission line more than 410 miles long. The line, strung from an average of four towers per mile, would cross rich farmlands, particularly in Minnesota. Farmers have organized to protest the building of the towers and stringing of lines across their land. Farmers have suggested alternative transportation methods including a buried line. Power cooperative spokesmen have responded that "There is no existing technology for building a power line of this size underground." If the project is completed the 800kv dc transmission line will be one of the largest in the United States.

airplane, a practice especially effective with land that remains heavy wet on into the spring. In Paynesville itself and throughout the adjacent countryside homes are mostly large and very solid. New trucks, new automobiles, and new paint are perhaps the commonest man-made sights around Paynesville. This is a highly productive and prosperous region. It is also a region known for its solid religious convictions, the people living in and around Paynesville being largely German Catholics.

From Paynesville north thirty miles to Sauk Center and then west to Glenwood and Lowry in Pope County, protesting farmers have fought steadily against the building of the power line across their land or the land of their neighbors. With resolutions in 1975 and testimony before the environmental quality siting authority in 1976, to participation in the peaceful gathering on the steps of the state capitol in 1977, these farmers and their friends in the surrounding towns have been very determined people. Somehow, though, it was as if all of the time they were testifying and protesting, the people in and around Paynesville and Glenwood and Lowry never did *really* believe that siting and construction crews would actually appear in the west one day and begin running a line across their land. Even when the courts condemned their land under right of eminent domain, the threat seemed more paper than real. The people believed that the state of Minnesota would save them from what they considered to be a threat to their livelihood and even their health. The people believed in traditional government and its primary functions to insure justice and preserve peace. Maybe Governor Rudy Perpich would intervene and stop the building of the line. Perpich was known as a fair man who had a respect for land and for hard work.

The people who lived most of their lives on these fertile farms simply could not imagine the technology of electric power transmission intruding, actually appearing outside their doors and on their fields in the form of steel towers 150 feet high, spaced a quarter of a mile apart, holding lines carrying enough energy to light up a city of perhaps a million people. It was not that the people were naive—they were not "a bunch of dumb farmers" as their opponents sometimes labeled them. Technology as sophisticated as electrically powered irrigation systems or technology in the form of a $60,000 piece of heavy equipment they could understand and they could use. But technology as high towers and hot cable crossing land that was as productive as any in the state was alien. They saw it as destructive. Sometimes they saw the conflict as another desperate clash between an older, simpler way of life and a wasteful, poisonous urban mania for more and more and more. No farmer in Pope or Stearns would willingly give up his land to that, even if the courts decreed he must.

But in 1977 siting crews actually began coming in from Traverse and Grant Counties to the west where they had already laid out the path of the line after it crossed the North Dakota border. The crews began working in eastern Pope and on into Stearns, and the farmers had to face a reality they had believed could never come about.

The history of disagreement between these farmers and the electric cooperatives trying to build the power line through west-central Minnesota is complicated. The two groups agree on almost nothing, neither fact nor interpretation of fact. The disagreement begins with the question of power needs.

Minnesota electric utilities and state planning agencies are convinced that the need for power in the state will increase sharply in the next twenty years. That need, they say, must be met with electric power; petroleum and natural gas are becoming too scarce and too expensive to meet forthcoming needs.

> In 1976 electrical energy made up 9½% and oil and natural gas made up approximately 86% of the total amount of net energy used in Minnesota. Historically, total energy growth has been at a rate of slightly greater than 4% per year. If this growth rate were to continue over the next 25 years, the demand for total energy in Minnesota will be two and one half times as large as it was in 1975.
>
> It has been predicted that the same 25 year period will see severe shortages of oil and natural gas so that by the year 2000 we will be using only ⅔ as much oil and ½ to ⅔ as much natural gas as we use today. This shortfall would be totally replaced by electrical energy . . .
>
> Substitution for this shortfall would result then in a demand for ten times the amount of electrical energy as today, if we assume the 4% annual growth rate in total energy demand. This would result in demand for nearly 70,000 MW of additional electrical energy in Minnesota in just 25 years.
>
> Future Electrical Energy Resource Demands — A Pilot Study, Minnesota State Planning Agency, 1976.

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Many planners believe that farmers themselves will need greater and greater supplies of electric energy as they begin using increasingly sophisticated farming equipment like large scale irrigation rigs. Planners maintain that farmers' electrical needs will rise far more sharply in the next few years than the needs of non-farmers. If this argument is valid, then the controversial new power lines and power plants are really for the benefit of rural people.

The farmers disagree. United in groups like CO: REG and CURE, they explore the future from their own perspective and come up with their own forecasts. They tend to believe that the days of reckless use of energy are over, that we are entering a time of conservation and moderation. Wendell Bradley prints an essay on power needs in *CO: REG Newsletter.*

> Will growth continue forever? Many utility watchers feel that the effects of higher prices, conservation, improved efficiencies, electrical appliance saturation and alternative energy sources will combine to depress future growth.

Farmers strongly deny that their own power needs will rise sharply. Instead, they say, through more efficient farming techniques and careful conservation of energy usage, they will keep their needs about the same level for the foreseeable future. Perhaps their needs will even drop a bit.

Whatever the real need for more power in the state may be, the state Energy Agency, after public hearings, has certified that Minnesota will need more electric power. (Farmers and environmentalists claim that their input to these hearings was largely ignored.) Such certification of need is the first and almost irreversible step in the building of more facilities either to produce or transport additional energy. Farmers are bitter about the certification of need, for this statement does not place or localize the facilities. The statement simply says there is a state need. Afterwards, ways and places can be found to put up facilities to supply that need.

With the need certified by the state, two power producing cooperatives, United Power Association of Elk River and Cooperative Power Association of Edina, began work on a vast project to produce electric power from lignite coal in North Dakota and export the power to central Minnesota. The cooperatives explained to the public that the power would be used throughout the state, as far north as Two Harbors and Lutsen and Virginia, as far south as St. James and Owatonna, these and other cities and towns receiving the power through a network of electric distribution systems.

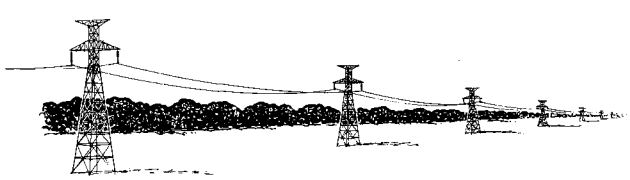
The project to generate this power and bring it in from North Dakota is complex, huge, and awesome. Two 500-megawatt electric generators are to be constructed at a place called Coal Creek Station near the town of Underwood in central North Dakota. The generating plant and high voltage transmission systems are estimated to cost between $700 and $800 million. They will have a life expectancy of thirty-five years. Electric energy would be generated by the burning of coal mined near the plant. The plant is located in an area with an estimated reserve of over 300 million tons of lignite coal covering an area of 18,000 acres. "The mammoth dimensions of a generating complex of this size are hard to comprehend," reads a pamphlet distributed by the two cooperatives. "Coal will be consumed at a maximum rate of almost 19,000 tons per day. Each piece will be crushed, ground and pulverized until it is fine as face powder for efficient combustion in the huge steam generating furnaces . . . Each of the two turbines will produce over 750,000 horsepower to drive the generators in both units of the plant. The chimneys are over 650 feet high." Each chimney is one hundred feet taller than the Washington Monument. Originally the plan called for the first of the two generators to be operating by November of 1978. The second generator would be in service one year later.

At full capacity the Coal Creek plant would produce a constant one billion watts of power. One billion watts (1,000 megawatts) is more than enough electrical energy to supply the total demand of a large American city. It is about one-third of the electrical power needed to supply the more than 3,000,000 population of the metropolitan Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

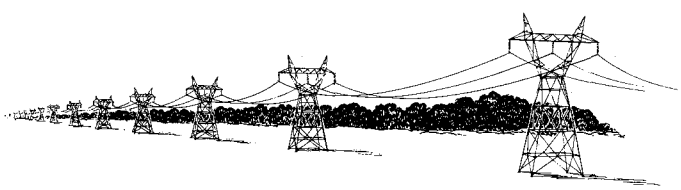
It is much cheaper and more efficient to burn coal at the mine mouth and transport the electricity it produces to places where the electricity is needed than it is to transport the coal to areas needing power and then burning the coal there to produce electricity. Therefore, electric power generated at Coal Creek would be transported on direct current transmission lines that would pass through approximately 225 miles of North Dakota farmland then across approximately two hundred miles of Minnesota land until it reached Delano, Minnesota, a station northwest of Saint Paul. At Delano, say power cooperative planners, the dc current would be converted to ac power and then fed into the cooperative systems.

The exact location of the line through Minnesota as it travels across Traverse, Grant, Pope, Stearns, Kandiyohi, Meeker, and Wright counties is determined by the Power Plant Siting Staff of the state Environmental Quality Board after public hearings in all areas affected by the line. Actually, two transmission lines would be used to carry the entire electric output of the Coal Creek generating plants, one line being suspended from each arm of the supporting towers. The lines are a bit over 1½ inches in diameter; under load, they heat to 130° F. (The power companies usually refer to the transmission lines as the ± 400 kv line. The ± indicates there are two lines, one

The proposed power line (actually now under construction) between the Coal Creek generating plant in North Dakota and the point of delivery north of Minneapolis will be a direct current line, the power being converted to alternating current after it arrives at its destination. Power company spokespeople say that dc transmission lines are superior to ac lines because dc lines require fewer than half the towers that would be required by ac lines of equivalent capacity.



Typical D.C. Line



Typical A.C. Line

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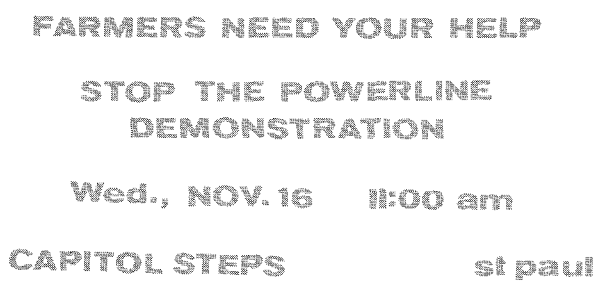

carrying positive and the other carrying negative current. Opponent-farmers usually refer to the line as the 800,000 volt line. Specialists dealing in large amounts of electrical power feel that it is nearly impossible to communicate to the average layman the real meaning of such quantities of electrical force and that one designation is about as good as the other.) The lines carrying current are to be supported by lattice steel towers averaging 150 feet in height, having bases approximately fifty by fifty feet. There are to be four such towers per mile. At the lowest points, the lines would hang fifty feet from the ground. This line would be about as large as any line in use in the United States today.

To alleviate fears of farmers who would be faced with the prospect of living and working around and even under these lines, the power cooperatives prepared a special issue of the CPA *newsletter*, "Special Report, Living With Direct Current Lines." The cover photograph of the report shows two men waving from far up on a high voltage tower. The two men are identified as employees of the cooperative. "The men were unable to detect the electrical field of the operating transmission line," says the report. It goes on, "Considering that any electric line can be hazardous, even those running into your home, CPA urges citizens not to conduct tests of this nature."

The special report addresses the farmers' fears.

DON'T THE LINES INTERRUPT FARMING AND IRRIGATION?

> Wherever practical, the cooperatives locate the towers on or parallel to division lines or section lines and out of productive acreage. In case after case, farmers have succeeded in planting and harvesting crops, where lines and structures have been carefully placed. All trees and buildings which would impair transmission line operation are not permitted in the right of way. Irrigation can be a problem because towers could block the path of swing booms. To avoid this potential problem, the cooperatives try to avoid lands that depend on irrigation or work closely with the local landowners to site their structures to obtain minimal disruption of irrigation activities. In addition, irrigation systems compatible to power structures have been developed.

AREN'T THE LINES DANGEROUS?

> Any high voltage transmission line is dangerous if people are careless. So to minimize danger, the cooperatives have built in safeguards for the CPA/UPA direct current transmission line. For example, if the line goes down, a direct current breaker automatically deadens it, preventing serious electric shock. Those working with electric equipment or motorized vehicles under the line are instructed to ground their equipment. Some people have claimed the lines produce electric fields, harmful to people, however, one study conducted by Johns Hopkins University concluded that this is not true. For nine years, doctors studied ten linemen who worked with high voltage lines. They found no negative health effects. Furthermore, throughout the 18 months of the hearings on the CPA/UPA direct current transmission line, there was no evidence introduced to indicate any health hazards could result from this line. Scientists continue to study the effects of extra high voltage transmission on people and animals.

Under a photograph of a line of towers crossing very flat farmland, the newsletter carried this message:

> Northern Manitoba farmers primarily grow oats, barley and wheat. The farmers said they are able to farm within four to six feet of the towers and guy wires and claim they have not noticed a decrease in crop production, nor have they changed any farming procedures. Cattle are pastured under the lines, and ranchers have not detected any increase in animal birth defects or abortions. Most say the line only becomes noisy in high winds, and have experienced minimal, if any, radio and television interference. No one has received any shocks from the line or has suffered from ill health due to the project.

Farmers were not convinced by these arguments. They distributed a mimeographed sheet titled "THIS IS WHAT OHIO FARMERS SAY ABOUT THEIR 765 KV LINE . . ."

> JOHN MILLER—his house is 143 feet from the center of a 154-foot tower.
>
> The Ohio Power Company grounded his daughter's swing set in the back yard because 90 volts were running through it.
>
> "The discharge (from the line) lights up my fence charger when the charger is turned off."
>
> E. G. RUGGLES—his house is 300 to 400 yards away from the line.
>
> He has been shocked while riding his tractor, especially when machinery with moving parts is attached.
>
> An electric fence running parallel with the power line will run itself without a charger. Any fence you don't want electrified must be grounded.
>
> CLOVIS STRASBAUGH—the line is in his back yard.
>
> There is enough of a magnetic field to operate an electric fence without a charger.
>
> The line will definitely devalue your property. "My property is split in two. I can't build. It's definitely devalued."
>
> FRANK TUCKETT—the line runs through his property, 300 yards from buildings.
>
> He discontinued using electric fences—the discharge made it unnecessary.
>
> He uses a stud bull. Cows pastured 300 to 500 yards from the line had less than a 10 per cent birth rate in 1976. Cows pastured two to three miles from the line had a 92 per cent calf birth rate in 1976.
>
> EARL FOX—the line runs 200 feet from his house.
>
> There is much noise, some TV interference, constant shocking under the line while riding a tractor.

Farmers also oppose the cooperatives' health and safety arguments with quotations from Dr. Merle Hirsh, chairman of the Division of Science and Mathematics at the University of Minnesota, Morris. Hirsh, who has recently been doing research in France on the effects of high voltage exposure, was quoted late in 1977 as saying, "We have demonstrated that the companies are in no position to state, unequivocally, that the proposed line is safe. Just as I'm not really in the position of being able to say, unequivocally, that it's not safe . . . If the power com-

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panies are right about the health hazard, then everything is fine. I wouldn't mind living under one (high voltage transmission line). But I'm not sure they are."

Perhaps the farmers' position on health and safety was supported a bit by a state Department of Health study released in early November of 1977. The study stated that current evidence does not indicate that power lines are a public health hazard, but it concluded that further study on possible effects of high voltage lines is needed. The one and one-half year study, which was not based on original research but was a compilation of existing studies done elsewhere on power line effects, concluded, "insufficient evidence is available to indict transmission lines as a public health hazard." Farmers read this report as saying that there was doubt at present about the health and safety hazards of the power lines. Farmers demanded that further construction be halted until absolute and irrefutable evidence be produced that the lines were completely safe.

Beyond the questions of health and safety lie other farmer objections to the running of the line through their productive land. Some of these objections have been brought together by Professor Luther Gerlach, an anthropologist at the University of Minnesota who has been studying the farmers and their protests since the beginning. The farmers think highly of Gerlach. They believe he is in sympathy with their resistance and they are flattered when he compares their protests with the Peasants Revolt in England in the fourteenth century. In 1976, Gerlach presented a long paper to the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association held in Chicago. The paper, which was titled "Developer, Resistor, Mediator, and Manager Networks in Conflict over Energy Development: Disintegration or a New Kind of Integration?", describes some of the farmers' practical difficulties with power towers.

> The cost of land in west-central Minnesota per acre varies according to location and condition, but the range for most of the land seems to be from $600 to $1200 an acre. To farm the bigger spreads, farmers turn to ever larger equipment, which in turn costs ever more because of sharp inflation, size and complexity. Implement companies are no longer making the smaller equipment which dominated farming about a decade ago. Only those who farm big spreads can afford the capital investment necessary, and they must seek to maximize productivity per acre. Since time is of the essence, farmers use ever wider equipment to plow, plant and cultivate more rows in each pass. Some will even remove old farmhouses and wood lots on their land to eliminate obstructions which might reduce their turnabout time and interfere with the efficiency and cost effectiveness of cultivation. They say that the key to successful farming is very often planting and harvesting within very narrow time spans. It is for this reason that each farmer will buy his own equipment rather than pooling it in some cooperative arrangement: "when you need it, you need it, and everyone needs it at the same time." It is for these reasons that they regard power towers with a fifty foot base and its stretching high voltage lines not only as a threat to safety but as an obstacle to maneuverability and time-effective operation. It is partly in order to save time and to get into their fields earlier to plant crops when low lying land is still wet and to reduce soil compaction brought about by heavy equipment that farmers are beginning to sow their crops from aircraft. And, of course, they have long used aircraft to spray pesticides and herbicides. In this respect, high towers from 135 to 150 feet high and their miles of high tension lines seem to pose a special threat, particularly if the lines cross their fields diagonally.

Farmers in Stearns and Pope counties faced the inevitable siting and construction crews bringing in the line from the west in 1977. Having never really believed the day would arrive, they now began to do more than petition. Having unsuccessfully tried to stop the lines through legal means—their appeal to the state supreme court was turned down. "The administrative proceedings in this case, which resulted in the designation of a high-voltage transmission line corridor, the designation of a route within that corridor, and the issuance of a construction permit and a certificate of need for the high-voltage transmission line, have not been demonstrated to be contrary to law or lacking in requisite factual support." The farmers began holding rallies, blocking the paths of siting crews, picketing construction sites, sometimes dismantling parts of towers ready to go into place. Sometimes surveyor crews found mysterious boulders in the siting paths. Markers disappeared. Farmers on tractors found it necessary to plow deep furrows in the very spots power crews needed to work. All of the while physically striving to stop construction of the lines, the farmers continued with their peaceful efforts to block the project. Again and again they went to the governor, the courts, to state officials both elected and appointed. In Washington their attorneys were preparing suits for federal courts challenging the procedures of eminent domain condemnation that had opened the way for the line.

By the middle of December 1977, protesting farmers were rallying in groups of two and three hundred in places like Lowry and Glenwood and moving on from the rallies to construction sites there to confront the work crews. The farmers showed little hostility toward the crews. Often the protesting farmers would engage in friendly dialogue with the workers, inviting the workers to go home. These large protest meetings sometimes took on the flavor of religious crusades with the farmers singing "This Land is Your Land" and then marching together to construction sites to "help take apart the construction that's already been done."

In early January, Governor Perpich ordered 175 state police to the Lowry area to "guard powerline work crews." It probably was not an easy decision for the governor. Commenting about his first year in office in 1977, he had said that the problem of the farmers and the power lines had occupied more of his time and thought than any other issue he had faced.

Almost immediately after the arrival of the state troopers in Lowry, there were clashes between the farmers and the patrolmen. Throughout the state and now beyond, newspapers carried photographs of farmers and troopers scuffling in the snow.

PROTEST HALTS POWERLINE

GLENWOOD, MINNESOTA (AP) Jan. 5, 1978. State troopers and powerline protesters scuffled again Wednesday, halting work in Pope County on construction of a controversial powerline from North Dakota.

More than 100 persons opposed to construction of the high voltage line harassed surveyors at three locations, then confronted workers at a construction site in Glenwood.

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Gloria Woida, Sauk Center, often a spokesperson for the powerline opponents, said troopers lined up to block entrance to the work site. She said protesters carried four American flags and said the officers "busted the flagpoles all to hell."

No arrests were reported.

But arrests by the state police came soon. In late January, fourteen opponents of the powerline project were arraigned in Pope County Court on charges that went from assault to obstructing legal process. Each of the fourteen pleaded innocent and requested a jury trial. "No jury from this county is going to find those folks guilty," a Sauk Center merchant told a reporter. Before the arraignment of the fourteen protesters, C. David Nelson, Pope County Attorney since 1966, resigned his position. He said he could not continue in office because he sympathized with the arrested protesters.

After the Governor appeared on television in January to plead with the farmers to obey the law of their land, the farmers answered with a television program of their own. From a television station in Alexandria, Earl Hague of Glenwood, an ordained Lutheran minister and a farmer, spoke against the dangers of misuse of eminent domain. He said that present laws in Minnesota do not protect the property rights of individual citizens. Another farmer from Belgrade, John Tripp, who described himself as a former chemical engineer, told the television audience that the power line would be dangerous to the health of both people and animals. It would generate a gaseous condition in the ozone that would be "several times more poisonous than phosgene and hydrogen cyanide."

Later the power cooperatives had their own television program, stressing safety and the need for more electrical energy throughout the state.

The confrontations and the arrests continued.

8 ARRESTED IN POWERLINE CONFRONTATION

LOWRY, MINNESOTA (AP) Jan 12, 1978. Five men and three women protesting construction of a high-voltage transmission line in west-central Minnesota were arrested Wednesday afternoon when they blocked the view of two surveyors.

A force of 175 state troopers has been guarding powerline work crews since Monday. The only other arrest in that period was Tuesday, when a young man was accused of spitting on a surveyor.

Leading Wednesday's peaceful parade before surveyor's transits placed in a snowy farm field east of Lowry were the owners of the land, Dennis Rutledge, 35, and his wife, Nina, 34.

Rutledge said he is a 1967 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and his wife is the daughter of an Army officer.

Construction on the line was described as "way behind schedule."

Minnesota farmers have resisted the building of the power line across their farms in a variety of ways, some verging on real violence. In the photo at top, farmers disassemble towers under construction near Lowry. At bottom, a farmer charged with obstructing the work of survey crews is hauled off to jail by state troopers.

H. Henry Southworth lives in a tiny three-room frame house just off Highway 23 in Paynesville. A retired high school civics teacher, he is a former mayor of Paynesville. Since the beginning of the conflict between the farmers and the power cooperatives, Southworth has actively supported the cause of the farmers. He attends as many rallies and confrontations as possible carrying a big cassette tape recorder to preserve the action. Southworth is a large, muscular man in his late sixties. He has two shocks of straight white hair coming back over his head just above his ears. "In a small town situation, the farmer and the townspeople have to stick together," Southworth says. "They need each other. What's good for one is good for the other. These farmers, some of them had their farms in the families for generations. Farm's more than just a way of making a living. These people care about their land. I guess you could say they love it." He seems just a bit embarrassed by the sentiment.

Southworth has agreed to have a meeting in his home between leaders of the farmers' movement and some writers looking for information. When the farmers first began organized opposition to the power lines, they were careful and protective about their meetings. They didn't trust publicity. "It used to be that you had to bring in a dead surveyor before they'd talk to you," Wendell Bradley said. But as 1977 drew to an end and surveyors and

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construction crews moved into Stearns and Pope Counties, farmers began talking to writers and journalists about their anger and their fears. They began to see publicity as another weapon in their fight.

Sitting in the very small front room of Southworth's home are five of the farmers vitally interested in the power line's progress or destruction. The men look too large for the room. They are heavy, well-fed, prosperous looking people in their thirties and forties. They are dressed in sport shirts with rolled up sleeves, jeans with wide leather belts, boots. They are eating chocolate cake and drinking coffee provided by Mrs. Southworth on little folding TV tables.

"If you want to know what we want," one man says, "we want them to scrap the whole Coal Creek project. It's as simple as that. Just because they've got fifty million invested in that plant over in North Dakota doesn't mean anything. Hell, the military is always calling off projects after they start them. Let these companies do the same thing."

"They treated us like they thought we were a bunch of dumb farmers when they had the hearings on locating this line. Those EQB fellows from Saint Paul, they were asleep in their chairs when we were talking, not listening to anything we had to say. (He imitates the Environmental Quality Board hearing officers by letting his arms fall limp over the sides of his overstuffed chair and dropping his head on his shoulder and closing his eyes and opening his mouth.) They already had their minds made up about that line site before they got to Stearns County. Anyway, they were tired of listening to farmers gripe when they got this far south."

There is a rectangular map of west-central Minnesota spread on the floor. The map is perhaps four feet long by one foot wide. The men gather around the map, one man on his knees pointing to some jagged lines.

"You see this line? That's Highway 94. See how it runs down from the North Dakota border right down into the Cities? That highway goes in the same direction as the power line. So when they first decided to put the line in, we told them put the line right along beside the highway. The highway's already there. Put the towers up along the right of way and they won't take up farm land. But they said no, they couldn't do that because forty-two people every day driving over that highway would get the idea that Minnesota scenery isn't pretty or that Minnesota isn't green or something."

"You say forty-two people?"

"Forty-two people's what the man said. Didn't make sense at the time."

"I think there's a lot more than forty-two people on that highway every day."

"No difference any way. They wouldn't put the line along 94 because of the tourists. No difference how many of them there are."

"Another thing, you see this place here on the map where the line gets kinda jagged? Over there. That's some land they kept away from. That's state land. See, after they said they couldn't follow 94 because of the tourists we told them to run the line through right here." He points to a spot on the map several inches below the inked-in route of the line through Stearns County. "They said no to that too. That's a wilderness and they can't put power lines through there because some cross country skier might see the towers when he's out skiing. Can you beat that? They don't want to bother the wild life so they go and try and put the towers on my land. Hell, they care more for a damned skunk than they do for the farmer. Look."

He takes a document from a bulging brief case. Minnesota Environmental Quality Council *FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS*. He points to a paragraph

> . . . the following land use areas shall not be approved for HVTL routes when feasible and prudent alternatives with lesser adverse human and environmental effects exist. . . . national parks, national historic sites, and districts and natural landmarks; national monuments; national wildlife refuge areas, national wild, scenic, and recreational riverways; state wild, scenic and recreational rivers and their land use districts; state parks; state registered historic sites; state historic districts; nature conservatory preserves; . . .

"See. They care more for a damned skunk than they do for a farmer."

When the talk turns to dangers that may exist for people living and working as close as fifty feet beneath two lines carrying enough electric energy to light up a major city, the farmers are worried.

"These companies will have to prove without any doubt at all that there is no danger to humans or to livestock, no danger of any kind at all, before the state of Minnesota lets them come on my land and build."

"Nobody knows what living and working under that much current can do to a man. I told the power company they could run their lines right through my property and I wouldn't say a word against it as long as they move their office to a mobile home and put that home right under the fifty foot high part of the line, make their people work in that mobile home every day, fifty-two weeks a year. They didn't even give me an answer."

"I saw somebody out where the surveyors were working last week. He was carrying a sign that said GOD IS ON OUR SIDE. I sure hope He is."

The talk becomes most bitter when it gets around to farmers who have been named defendants in $500,000 damage suits by the power cooperatives. Essentially the suits charge farmers with obstructing construction of the line or interfering with workmen by removing markers and signs or by plowing obstructive furrows or placing boulders in troublesome spots to harass work crews. These men know at least three farmers being sued by the cooperatives and even though the men in this room consider the charges merely hollow gestures, they acknowledge that this tactic has caused a great deal of grief in the area.

"The way we work, you see, one tractor might cost thirty thousand dollars or even more. We don't always have that kind of cash around, so we have to have credit. You've got to have credit to farm. Well, if you've got a half million dollar law suit over your head, nobody's going to lend you money, even if the suit is a joke."

"There's no jury in this or any county anywhere around here that'd give damages to the company in that kind of suit."

"Still, the suit's no joke. You know Darus. They filed one against him and he owed this little note—only four thousand dollars—and the bank came to him right away and asked him to pay it early, even though it wasn't due for six months at least."

"Wanted to get their money first, in case."

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"Right. In case. That lawsuit really got to Darus. Hasn't been the same since. He doesn't even answer his telephone any more. It's a dirty shame."

Whatever the final outcome of the power controversy in Minnesota, there will be no winners. If the power cooperatives do finally stop construction and "go away" as the farmers want—a highly unlikely possibility—the cooperatives stand to lose millions of dollars and the state may face a very serious energy shortage. If construction of the line continues, farmers' fear, resentment, and opposition will go on for years. These farmers are not people who give up easily or quickly. Stearn and Pope Counties will be troubled spots for a very long time to come.

Perhaps the only constructive result of the power line controversy so far has been widespread discussion in Minnesota of the idea of a Science Court. The idea first received attention in July of 1977 when Governor Perpich suggested it as a possible vehicle for solution of the dispute. It is now clear that this conflict has gone on too long for the proposed court to be of any value in this dispute. However, the idea of a Science Court has received a good deal of thought and attention. It may be a way to avoid other conflicts in the future.

In recent years the number of serious public issues that revolve around highly complex technological disputes has grown larger and larger. For the Minnesota farmers, the issues are health and safety living close to electric power lines carrying loads too large to be imagined. For other citizens of the state and beyond, the question has been the significance of low level nuclear radiation from nuclear power plants, or the dangers of water fluoridation, or the use of chemicals as spray for farm land and forests, or noise and pollution problems caused by ultra high speed aircraft. In cases like these, one of the greatest difficulties facing governmental regulatory bodies, participants in the disputes, and the general public has been conflicting testimony from "experts," contradictory judgments from scientists termed "authorities," some who support one side and some who support the other. The farmers found good scientists who say that the proposed power line may not be entirely safe. The power cooperatives produced scientists and experts who testify there is no real danger. Which experts should prevail? Whose experts are the real experts? How does anyone know whether or not to believe that the power line is dangerous? is safe?

The Science Court proposal suggests that long before controversial projects like the construction of high voltage power lines are begun, a panel of at least three scientists be established to examine all testimony and evidence related to the case. The examining scientists are to be "capable" in the field. They are to be persons having no connection with the issues at hand. They are to have the right to question authorities who submit testimony about technological aspects of the project. The court itself is to be funded with a "no strings attached" budget, possibly by a non-profit organization or foundation.

There would be advocates for each side in the dispute; these advocate-managers would marshall and present testimony and evidence. After hearing the evidence and weighing it, the Science Court would publish its findings, possibly in the form of statements:

1. Statements of fact accepted by both advocates.
2. Statements of judges' opinions on challenged facts (including statements about probable validity or margins of error.)
3. Statements that insufficient scientific knowledge exists to render a sound decision.
4. Statements suggesting areas for research which might result in sufficient scientific knowledge for a future decision.*

Most supporters of the Science Court idea suggest that it should not have legal powers to enforce its judgments. However, it is clear that such a deliberative body would have a very considerable influence in eliminating the confusion that is created today by claims and counter claims of scientific authorities on highly technical matters.

Had there been a Science Court hearing on the dangers of ultra-high voltage lines over productive farmland before construction of the Coal Creek plant began, the issues and choices would have been much clearer than they are today. No one believes that a court could wipe away all the disagreement in cases like this one; no matter which way a Science Court leaned, someone would have been disturbed. However, the objective, impartial nature of the court would have allowed its judgments to be a powerful and convincing argument for clarity and peace. As it is today in Minnesota, no one really knows whether the bulk of evidence leans for the cooperatives or for the farmers.

To work properly, a Science Court would require time before it could produce meaningful judgments. There would have to be time to acquire testimony and evidence, time to examine the facts and the claims, time to knit findings together, time to compose final statements. In a complex scientific dispute, the time could well run to a year, perhaps more. It is this time element that now makes the court a nearly impossible solution in Stearns and Pope Counties. Offered the opportunity to throw the present dispute before a Science Court, Minnesota farmers have expressed interest. However, they have stipulated that all construction on the line must stop until after the court issues its conclusions. The electric cooperatives building the line have also expressed interest. They insist that construction of the line must continue during the time a court is in session.

The Science Court will have to be built into future projects from the very beginning. Because of the very nature of its deliberations—careful, thorough, complex—it is no last minute answer to disagreement.

So far, no one has actually conducted a full-fledged Science Court. The Ford Foundation in mid-1977 was willing to fund a pilot Science Court experiment in the Minnesota dispute. Even though that offer fell through, many proponents of the court idea think the interest generated by the foundation in this case will lead to a real court experiment before long. Optimistic forecasts about the importance of such courts in the future are beginning to appear in both legal and scientific journals. *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists,* for example, carried an article a year ago describing both good and doubtful benefits of the court. Entitled "The science court experiment: criticisms

*For a fuller discussion of Science Court procedures, see H.T. Markey, "A forum for technocracy?", *Judicature.* March, 1977. 365-371.

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and responses," the article was subtitled, "Misunderstandings, pitfalls and imperfections should not deter us from devising better ways to advise policy makers."

Because of the attempts to initiate a Science Court to hold hearings in west-central Minnesota, the court idea has received considerable attention in the state. Perhaps the court will be given its first trial in Minnesota. Optimists who insist on finding something good in every situation can look to Science Court publicity as one good thing to come out of the farmers' and the power cooperatives' disagreement. There is little else of good in that dispute. □

DAVE KELLY

GARGANTUA WALKING

How long do I have to march in this patriot rain,
this gift from the moron cloud, how long shoulder to shoulder
with the widow who hears her son scratching all night
in the walls of the house she no longer lives in?

On Tuesday the Apostle Paul went over his letters: a comma
here, a new paragraph there, respelling the poor word, fish.
All day Wednesday we waited for the mail to go out in the rain,
for the tall, lonely man in the waterproof coat to avoid
the dogs on his way here, for the ground to become its measure.

Maybe it's because of my fist, maybe because of the man
in my fist, sorry from alcohol, sorry because I've broken his jaw;
maybe I've become the boy again who could knock down an uncle
at the age of eight and whose tooth became a tomb at fifteen.

Walking along then, in the idiot downpour, on the bleak road;
walking along in bad shoes, the fish sour, the loaves wet
and wasted to a fine mould, beans for this, beads for that,
always a boy too soon to mean it when he sings apologies, always
a man too late for the song to return with the rain and its song,

and this is why I became in a day that kind of monster
whose steps shake a whole house, whose anger defies thunder,
whose children shudder even in their sleep at his laughter,
at his, "Fee, fie, foe, fum, I smell the blood of kingdom come!"

This is why I broke the book open to find its worm, laughed
at the nuns with their carts, their x-ray machines, drank ink
and refused to come back, despised sorrow and handshakes
until it was too late, spit at my priest, refused him his apple
and, when the rain sang like snakes, I went out to it.

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David Groves

Forms

(Some Things That Happened While Emilia Was in Arizona)

K. K. is bothering me again. He came up to me in the lunchroom today and said in a too-loud voice that I'm dumb and fat and old. He slapped me on the back and said, "That's why we all hate you, Luis-baby." Then he stalked away, clenching and unclenching his hairy fists, laughing his razor blade laugh.

I am sort of fat. Not real fat. But I got a big stomach. And a round face. Emilia and me have been saying for at least fifteen years that we would start jogging or swimming or do something for our health. I even bought some sweats at a garage sale with "Duke University" across the chest. But I never used them. By now it's sort of a joke.

Anyway, I get enough exercise pushing my broom and hosing down floors at the meatpacking plant all day. I've done it for 44 years.

I watched television all day today. I started at eight in the morning with Bugs Bunny and ended at two in the morning with "They Saved Hitler's Brain." In between there was the Sox vs. New York and "Wanted: Dead or Alive" and "Divorce Court." When they started playing the national anthem my head was so chocked full of fake life and romantic endings and used car salesmen that I took two aspirins and went right to sleep. I usually don't watch TV, but today it helped me forget that my wife is gone for two weeks to Arizona. Emilia hasn't been back to Arizona in seven years. She is probably on the Greyhound right now, asleep, dreaming of her sisters and nephews and cousins and Mama, who turned eighty last December.

The best part of the day was morning and the cartoons. When I was a kid I wanted to be Bugs Bunny. He's so wise. With his tall ears. And his carrot. In one cartoon Bugs was being chased by Elmer Fudd. Finally Fudd cornered him on a cliff, ready to shoot him.

"Please don't shoot me!" Bugs begged. "I'm too young to die!"

"How young are you, wabbit?" Fudd asked.

"Twenty-eight," Bugs answered. "And you?"

"Fifty-eight."

"Fifty-eight?!" Bugs pointed at Fudd. "You're fifty-eight years old?! Yuk yuk yuk! You're too old to live!"

Fudd eventually blasted his own brains out. I sat in my easy chair, stunned for a moment. Finally I recovered and flipped the channel. I turned fifty-eight last month.

Emilia and me usually go to early service, but today she wasn't here to keep nagging me about getting up so I

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barely made it in time for late service. I didn't want to pray for K.K. But in the middle of Pastor Lamadrid's sermon he brought his fist down on the podium and shouted, "Love thy enemy, *I* say, love thy enemy, *Jesus* says, love thy enemy because that's what he's *there* for, to test your love!"

I think God was trying to tell me something. I prayed that K.K. would stop bothering me. Maybe if he started going to church. But you know how with some things you can sense that God won't help you? Or that he's helping you already by not helping?

I don't know why I miss Emilia so much. She's left me alone before and I survived. But you know I turned fifty-eight last month. These days I dream a lot of falling, falling at a frightening speed into a black, black hole. A mouth. Like someone inhaling me and I have no control. I don't know. It's a puzzle and I'm no good at puzzles. All I know is that I miss Emilia an awful lot.

From three to four I talked to George over the fence. George and Mary and me and Emilia go way back. George is only five foot three so he has to stand on an empty Coors crate to talk over the fence. He has a Hitler mustache and rarely laughs. But when he does, I laugh too, because he only laughs with his bottom lip, like the mustache was a square nail pounded into his top lip to stop him from being really happy. Sometimes I tell jokes just to see him fight with his laugh, his top lip clamped into place, his bottom lip trembling like something not entirely beaten trying to get out.

George is the smartest person I know, probably a genius, but I really don't know what a genius is, so I don't know, but I do know he's the smartest friend I have. He studies history, and he was saying how Socrates used to ask funny questions when his 16-year old son Charley walked into the backyard. His smile suddenly died, as if his son had taken a hammer and pounded the square nail much too deeply into his top lip.

"Hey!" George shouted, stepping down from the crate. "Where were *you* last night?"

Charley didn't answer. His brown hair hung limply over his face. He yanked a pair of white-blue Levi's off the clothesline and walked back into the house.

"You come back here, son!" George scuttled after his boy. He looked and sounded like a comedian. I started to laugh but it wasn't funny. "You tell me this very minute why you didn't come home last night!"

The screen door slammed. I heard yelling, then the crash of glass, then a woman crying. As I walked back into the house it sounded like war.

I like listening better than talking. George next door is a good talker. Emilia and me used to go over to George and Mary's for hot chocolate and roasted nuts and talk, lots of words late into the night and early into the morning. George used to get real philosophical, telling us about Aristotle and Saint Augustine and Magna Carta, lots of those old-time people. I just chewed my nuts and listened. It made me feel smart to listen to his smart talk. Once he spent three hours telling us about Plato's forms, describing how everything in this world is just a bad copy of a model of the original up in heaven. Like dogs, he explained. They all come from heaven's statue of the perfect dog. A model for all other dogs. An idea of what a dog should be.

"The form gives them their dogness," George said. "Dogness. Isn't that rich, Mary?" he added, flashing his wife a nailed-down smile. Mary smiled.

Then Emilia started scolding him, saying dogness wasn't a Baptist idea and was therefore sacrilegious. George argued that dogness certainly was Baptist, much more Baptist than anyone realizes, that he saw it mentioned once somewhere in the Book of Corinthians, something about what no eye has seen, that's what forms, and heaven, are like.

"What about me?" I asked.

George turned around and looked at me. I hardly ever say anything when George is talking smart so my voice was a surprise. "What about you, Luis?" George said.

"Is there a form of me?" They all looked at me blankly. "I mean, is there a form of Luis that gives me my Luis-ness?"

Everyone laughed. I smiled, pretending that I had planned the joke, whatever the joke was. But I really wanted to know.

"I suppose there is, Luis. A model of what every single Luis Palmas should look like." He chuckled, bottom lip trembling.

"And that model, it never gets old?" I asked.

"That's right. Forms are ageless."

It's not dying that scares me, it's just getting old. George says cave men used to die at thirty. They used to die of broken legs and infected cuts and colds. Silly things killed them. Now silly things let them live. They grow up to thirty and then grow down to sixty, and from then on out it's all cold, subzero weather.

But if Emilia and me could sit still and beautiful in the mind of God, if the Bible would come true, if the Book of Corinthians would make us into forms, then we would be apart from all this worry, this excuse-making, and we would never die.

No one wants K.K. mad at them. When he's mad he's more than mad. It burns in him bad for months. Last week I told the foreman he was stealing beef. He would hide big chunks of it under his jacket and walk out smiling so sweet like nothing was wrong. I wanted to teach him a lesson. Now that he's caught he doesn't steal anymore. But I don't think he's learned any lesson.

Ever since we got married 40 years ago, Emilia has thrown out hints about piano lessons, so finally eight years ago I broke down and decided I could spare five dollars a week. The teacher, Miss Iwan Pak, was a recent Korean emigrant who spoke only broken English. She had deep creases on the sides of her slanted eyes which gave her a kind of evil look. She moved very careful, deliberate, like a half-alive statue, like if she moved too much she would give her secret away.

"Piano playing is a discipline," Miss Pak said in brutally correct English. "Much like athletic training. Daily

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practice is imperative. Do you understand?" We both nodded our heads. I looked at Emilia. She fidgeted in her seat, looking scared. I looked at Miss Pak. She looked at Emilia for a long time, saying nothing.

Emilia practiced hard every evening from seven to eight-thirty. Since we couldn't afford a piano, George and Mary next door said Emilia could practice on their 1909 upright. Emilia played simple songs. I often imagined that she was six again with pigtails and tiny fingers and even tinier fingernails. I would sit on the couch, head back, eyes closed, painting pictures inside my head that looked like how the music sounded. There were hummingbirds and zebras and floppy-shoed clowns. Angry bears chasing me into dark caves. And dancing bears in bow-ties and taps coaxing me out. Sometimes Emilia would turn around and give lessons to me. "You know what a chord is?" I would shake my smiling face and she would make a sound with her fingers. "That's a chord. Miss Pak says the chord is the cornerstone of musical expression."

Emilia took lessons for ten months. Then one day she came home with a strange, very tired look on her face.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

She looked up. Her eyes were red. She ran to me, crying on my workshirt, saying Miss Pak blew her top, that she yelled, waving her fists, accusing Emilia of never practicing, saying she had fingers like wet noodles and no talent, saying she refused to give Emilia another lesson. Then she started cursing her in Korean. Emilia, stunned and ashamed, quietly excused herself and sped home in the Corvair.

"We could change teachers," I said.

Emilia hasn't touched the piano since. But she collects used piano solo records. Ragtime, blues, dixie, anything with a loud, healthy piano. "It is something that never dies," she sometimes says, "this noble music."

I wonder if K.K. believes in God. But maybe it's not a matter of believing. Even the Devil *believes* in God. Maybe it's a matter of doing.

Emilia finally called at seven. I was so fussed up that I wanted to know everything at once, was it hard to sleep on the bus and was her sister over the flu and I'll bet the kids have grown and is Mama well and does she still talk your ear off and then I heard her laughing helplessly and telling me to slow down and speak clear because the connection was bad and besides, I wasn't letting her get a word in edgewise.

"I was afraid the bus was going to crash," I confessed.

"It didn't crash." Emilia's voice was quiet and reassuring. "The driver reminded me of you, Luis, such tiny brown eyes."

We talked about everything, about K.K. and George's Charley and Arizona and everything.

"Luis, you know what my sister gave me as a homecoming present? Five player piano rolls. They got confused by one of my letters and thought we had a player piano. They're my favorite, Fats Waller and Scott Joplin and Joe King Oliver and stuff, but Luis, what are we going to do with five player piano rolls and no piano?"

I said I didn't know, because we certainly don't have enough money for a player piano. I told her we're still paying money on the Corvair.

"I know, Luis. I didn't mean that."

She closed up. I tried to think of something to say. I asked her some more about Mama and she opened up again.

Pretty soon we realized that we had been on the phone for a half hour and the call was costing a fortune. So we spent five minutes on goodbye and then it was over. For a minute I was giddy. Walking around. Smiling when I remembered things she said. I hadn't heard from her in a day and a half. But then I stopped walking. The house was still too quiet and too dark. Everything seemed hollowed out with a knife, the house, the lightless night, and me. I got into bed. The sheets were cold. I tried to go to sleep. After an hour I was still awake, gently fingering the slip of my pillow.

I remember things sometimes. The way things used to be. When Charley was little. Roly-poly kid. Hardly said a word. George and Mary and me and Emilia used to do everything together then. Me and Emilia used to lie in bed nights and wish so hard that we could have a kid like George and Mary. Now that Charley's grown they don't feel like doing much with us anymore. Seems they're always yelling at Charley. Emilia still wishes she could've had a son and watch him grow, but maybe it's better we couldn't.

The phone woke me up at one this morning. It was K.K.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Luis-baby," he said. "I must have got the wrong number." He waited five seconds, then laughed, then hung up.

At four, when I went outside to go to work, I saw that someone had thrown eggs at my grey pickup. The eggs had dried onto the paint. I was late to work trying to rub off the stain.

By nine I noticed that my lunchbox was missing. I decided to ignore everything. Maybe K.K. would forget I was alive. I bought a Twinkie for lunch because I only had a quarter in my pocket. I ate it alone in my truck. It was a hot day and hot in my truck. I drew funny faces on a used envelope and thought of Emilia and sweated.

At fifteen to one I spotted K.K., hands behind his back, a smirk on his face, bouncing as he walked toward me. He fingered one of the egg stains on the truck and smiled.

"Nasty stain," he said.

I looked straight ahead and said nothing.

"How was your lunch, Luis-baby?" he asked.

I crumpled up the envelope. "Why are you doing this?"

"Because you're old and I'm young," he said flatly.

I was silent. I wished he would go away.

"You must be sixty by now, old man. Doesn't that get to you?"

I started tearing at the edges of the envelope.

"You only got about four or five good years left. Then you're a baby again."

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He dropped a jar of baby food onto my lap. Then he walked away silent. If he would have laughed it would have been okay. I had gotten used to his laugh. But he didn't laugh. I waited a few minutes. Then I turned the rear view mirror toward my face. There were wrinkles everywhere. My face looked like a crumpled-up piece of meat-wrapping paper. I turned the mirror away.

The bell rang and lunch hour was over. I wished Emilia was home so I could call her and just talk for a couple minutes. But Emilia was in Arizona. Work was starting again. I looked at the jar of baby food in my hand. It was chocolate. I didn't want to eat it. But I hadn't had any real lunch and I was so hungry.

After I got home from work today I felt so grimy that I jumped into the shower and scrubbed for a half hour with gritty white soap. I was scrubbing at the back of my hand, but the scrubbing wasn't working. I scrubbed harder. It was just no good. Then I looked closely. I wasn't scrubbing at dirt at all, but a new liver spot.

But even scrubbing couldn't chase away the stale smell. In past years these blemishes and smells have only come in small amounts. Now they arrive daily and won't go away. It takes some getting used to.

Ugly was sick tonight. It must have been Charley again. He's always doing things to my bulldog. Like last month, when I caught him flicking funny brown cigarettes over the fence. Ugly gobbled them up, then stood on his haunches and barked for more. Charley was in stitches, a wheezing laugh behind brown drapes of greasy long hair. I yelled at Charley—he stopped laughing and walked away quick—and let Ugly inside, where he got sick on my sneakers.

This time I looked out the window and saw Ugly walking crooked. Then he started running around in circles until he ran head-on into the side of the house. He tried to stand up again but couldn't. He threw up on a dandelion. I took him inside, wrapped him in a towel, and gave him a bowl of Gravy Train with a ground-up Bayer sprinkled over the top. I called up George.

"Your son," I said darkly, "that son of yours Charley. . . ." I told him everything, getting madder and madder the more I told him. When I was done, I expected a sincere apology and his solemn word that it would never happen again. But after a short silence he only said in a stern, dark voice, "Thank you very much, Luis," and hung up. That made me so mad that I stared at the phone for a few seconds, then turned on the TV and tried to follow a baseball game for a while, but all I could think of was how rude George had been.

Later that night, when Charley got back home, I heard yelling in front of their house. I looked out the window and saw Charley hop into his Charger and screech off into the night. George kept yelling even after the car was gone. Then he stared down the street, silent. After a few minutes he sat on the curb and lowered his head. George was short and the curb was tall. Last year he told me he had shrunk two inches since January. I squinted my eyes looking at George. He sat very still and small under the off-white eye of the streetlamp. Somehow I couldn't be mad at him anymore.

The phone woke me up again this morning. But this time it was Emilia. She sounded sleepy and scared.

"Are you okay?" she asked, her voice not together yet.

"Yes, I'm okay," I mumbled, sleepy.

"Did anybody break into the house? Did you lock all the doors?"

"All the doors are locked. No one could possibly break in." I propped myself up in bed and rubbed my eyes. "What's the matter, Emilia?"

"I don't know," she said, embarrassed. "I just had this bad dream, and, you know, I just wanted to see if you were okay."

I saw a player piano in the window at Kasha's today. It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen, I swear, painted bright green with gold curly-Q's around the edges and gold decorations on the sides, all fancy with all that green and gold stuff like something rich out of history. Emilia would adore it. Then I saw the pricetag: "$1199. Satin-covered piano bench included." I made myself walk away. No use loving something you can't have.

Where I am going. I forgot where I was going, what I was doing today while at the wheel of the Corvair. It scared me that I had forgotten where I was going. I slowed down. A car started honking. I stopped in the middle of the street. I turned to my wife but she wasn't there. I was thinking hard. Where was I going? Emilia knows. If only she were here. Cars were stabbing me with honks. I closed my eyes tight and put my forehead against the cold steering wheel. Where was I going? Doesn't Emilia know? Or is she just as lost and scared as I am?

K.K. was mad today, more mad than I've ever seen him. I don't know why he was mad because I didn't do anything to make him mad. Afterwards someone told me he had just been fired. Someone else told me he had lost his girlfriend. I don't know what to believe. But when I came around with my pushbroom and K.K. standing next to his meat-grinder saw me, his eyes flared up so black that I dropped my broom.

"You see this?" K.K. growled, holding up a chunk of beef with his fingers. "This is you, you son-of-a-bitch." He jammed the beef into the meat-grinder. I saw it being eaten. I saw the wormy strands of hamburger down below that it had become. Something inside me suddenly wanted to cry.

"If I get my hands on you, you idiot, you're dead," he hissed, throwing another chunk into the machine. "See?" he roared, showing me another chunk of beef. "See?" He started throwing chunk after chunk into the machine, jabbing at the beef with his fingers like they were swords and he was killing it, hissing, "See? See?"

I picked up my broom and tried to hurry away. It was then that I heard K.K.'s scream. It was not from this world. I turned around and saw K.K.'s arm caught in the meat-grinder up to the elbow, saw his twisted face, saw the meat of his forearm coming out in hamburger-like

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strands down below. I dropped my broom and stared. Someone stopped the machine, pulled K.K. from his mangled forearm, and nearly dragged him, panting and growling with pain, to the nearest first-aid station. I stood there for five minutes stunned. When the foreman finally ran up to me and asked if I saw what happened, I couldn't get out even a word.

I got drunk tonight. I tried to call Emilia, but Conchita said she was out to dinner. I tried twice more, but she was still out to dinner. My stomach felt bloated with Coors.

At 9:30 a car screeched to a stop outside. I walked out there, slow, to keep my balance. There was a Charger stopped in front of George's house, motor running, door open. Inside George's house there was yelling again. Then the door flew open and Charley walked quick toward his car, a black medical bag in one hand, a stuffed shopping bag in the other.

"I order you to go to your room!" George shouted, scuttling after his boy. "I order you to wait until the police come!"

Charley paid no attention, but George caught up with him at the sidewalk and grabbed him by the arm.

"You heard what I said, boy!"

Charley reeled around and looked down at his father. George seemed to go limp under his son's gaze. He bowed his head and placed his hand on his son's shoulder.

"Charley," he said gently. "Won't you please stay?"

The boy was stopped cold, surprised at the softness in his father's voice. He looked back at his mother, standing in the doorway, and then at his father again, and then he realized his guard was down. His shoulders quickly tensed up again. He slapped his father's hand off his shoulder. Then he shoved his father to the sidewalk. Without a word, he walked quick to his car and sped away.

I tried to run over to George, but lost my balance and fell down. Struggling to my knees, I crawled to where he sat.

"Y'okay, George?" I said, my words slurred bad.

"Get out of here!" he blubbered, his hands on his temples, shaking his head at the sidewalk. "Go ahead, leave! I don't need you!" The words caught in his throat and came out of his mouth like spit.

"B' George," I said. "I jus' wanted t'see if . . . ."

"Ever since you came we've been miserable because you made us miserable so go ahead, son, leave, I don't care!"

I looked over at Mary. She was no more than a silhouette in the doorway, leaning on the doorframe, shoulders gently shaking. Nothing was making any sense and the beer wasn't helping any. I placed my hand on George's shoulder. "George, I don' wanna go 'way, George. We're old friends. Y'don' wanna sen' me 'way, George, do ya?"

I could feel his shoulders tense up. Suddenly he raised his head and looked at me. The square nail was there in the middle of his face, pounded in deeper than ever, turning his face into something stern and fierce, like the frozen eyes of a mad general. He slapped my hand off his shoulder.

"Get out of here!" he shouted. "Out!" He crawled to his feet and looked down at me like I was a bad boy. "Go away!" Then he ran back into the house and slammed the door behind him.

I looked at George's door for a long time. Then I looked down at my hands. Then I rolled over on my stomach and cried.

When I went outside to go to work, there was still a police car in front of George's house. I was ashamed to go over there. Finally I got up my courage. I walked up to his window. My head was throbbing from last night's beer. The policeman was in the driver's seat writing on a notepad.

"What happened?" I asked.

The policeman glanced up from his pad. "It's a long story," he said.

"I'm a friend of the family. I've been their next door neighbor for 25 years. Can't you tell me what happened to Charley?"

The policeman took a deep breath. "All right," he said. "It's like this. The kid was selling heroin. We got tipped off and he got away from us. He came back here to pick up some stuff, got in a fight with his father, and left. His father had a nervous breakdown."

"Nervous breakdown?" I repeated. "George?" I couldn't believe it.

"That's right, mister. Couldn't even talk straight."

Just before closing time the foreman came up to me and said that K.K. was in the hospital and doing fine. He said the company was going to give him a one-armed job for life to repay him for his lost arm. I didn't know what to say. I didn't know why he was saying this to me. Then he handed me an envelope.

"K.K. said to give this to you. He said you're the one he tells all his secrets to. He said this letter was important because it was personal," he said. "I guess you know him pretty well, huh?"

I looked at him weird. He didn't know. He walked away and I opened the envelope. On a page ripped out of a calendar he had written in awkward handwriting, "When I get out, Luis-baby, I'm going to kill you."

I got drunk again tonight. I crumpled up my beer cans and lobbed them at a trashcan across the room. I mostly missed.

I decided to call Emilia. Her sister Conchita answered the phone and said they were at a movie.

"Y'sure?" I asked.

"Yes, I'm sure."

I hesitated. "Well, jus' wanted uh call." I started tapping on my empty beer can. "I don' know. Jus' wanted uh call."

"Are you all right?" she asked.

"Yeah, 'm all right." There was a long silence because I couldn't think of what to say. Finally I said, "Tell 'Milia I called, huh?"

"Are you sure you're all right, Luis?" she asked. "I could call the moviehouse."

I straightened up and cleared my throat. "I'm jus' fine, thangew," I said, trying not to slur my words, and hung up.

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I banged my shin on a coffee table trying to get back to my chair. My shin didn't feel so bad after a couple more beers. I looked around the room and everything came to me in spurts—the windows, the ceiling, even time—and I smiled because the beer was drowning out everything bad like beautiful music drowning out the scream of sirens. I drank another beer and then another and the symphony rose higher and higher like a flood.

Then it stopped. I listened. It was the doorbell, I think. I listened closer. There it was again, I thought, but I couldn't be sure. The bell came to me from far off, like fog drifting toward me making me cold. I rubbed my arms and stood up unsteady. There, did I hear it again? Like a hospital bell. Or no, like a church bell. Not like a doorbell at all.

"Who's there?" I yelled. He didn't answer. "I said who is it?"

I limped careful to the door and put my ear up to the crack. He was silent like he had been the last time. I turned the knob and opened it slow. Then I opened it wider. There was no one outside. I stepped out to the porch and looked around, limped out to the sidewalk and looked down the street. No one.

I buried my head under the sheets and prayed to God that I wouldn't go under. The phone rang and I prayed to God for something I could see, something I could run my fingers over that would make me never go under, never lose it. But I had nothing to grab onto because I'm not a Catholic and I don't have a rosary. I curled up into a ball and pressed my hands together and said oh please God, please Christ, please Holy Ghost, don't let me go under. Everything's falling apart and I know soon it'll be me so please God give me something solid that will keep me from going under.

I was cold. I pulled the sheets up close and shivered, waiting. The phone rang and rang and rang but I was afraid to answer it because I had this silly but terrible feeling that it was God on the line and that he was calling collect.

I woke up today feeling fragile. There was no getting around it. I knew what I had to do. Time was running out and it made me nervous.

When the phone rang I did not answer it. I knew what I had to do. If I answered the phone and talked to Emilia she would probably talk me to my senses and I would end up not doing it.

I was waiting outside Kasha's at ten when the store opened. No one had bought the player piano yet. I looked it over, walking around it several times, looking for blemishes. There were none. It was perfect, just like one of George's forms. Like God sent it to me to fight death. I touched a key. It sounded like silk feels, soft, not human.

When Emilia returns she will stand in the doorway with her bags in her hand and no words will come. But she will see it, how perfect this green and gold player piano is. She will touch it. And then she will look at me and smile. After 41 years of marriage I guess we know each other pretty good. □

TOM McKEOWN

WALKING PEACHTREE BATTLE AVENUE, ATLANTA

If any blood remains
It is breathing in the blossoming dogwoods
These sprays of color floating in the light rain
No voice or bugle rises above the rain
Nothing sweeps up the hill of grass and flowers
Today the many houses are lost to themselves
They hold their faces upright
Expressionless as if embarrassed to look at what
Has passed before them
Often the armies meet as mist and wait
With softened eyes
Their weapons weightless their bodies
About to dance into the dense music of the sun
Their faces are creased with joy
Having walked out of blood and powdering bone
Out of every afternoon that believed in vanishing

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SUSAN DARTER HUNT

A MATTER OF IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES

I'm not going to discuss it," she said.

"But we *have* to discuss it," her husband said. "You didn't understand what I said."

She shook her head and would not look at him. "I did too, and I'm not going to talk about it."

"Well, I'm not going home until you do," he said.

"Suit yourself. Are you planning to sleep here?"

"I'll go stay with my brother." He finished his champagne and waited for her to give in.

"Go ahead," she said and got up from the table and went out, nearly tripping over the long black velvet skirt she'd bought just for this opening night performance of *La Bohème* at the Kennedy Center. It had been a glorious performance, she thought as she went to the elevator, but now he had ruined it. After the opera they had come, as they always did, to have a drink in Le Grand Scène, the restaurant and cocktail lounge on the top of the Kennedy Center. But the elegant surroundings, the red plush couches, the crystal chandelier, the French waitresses who always remembered them—all were inappropriate tonight because they were quarreling, and the mirrors that panelled the walls reflected only their angry faces.

The elevator took a long time coming, and she thought he would get to her before the elevator did, but he did not. So when the elevator came she got into it and went down. The lobby was already dark and deserted and she hurried through it and outside to the taxi stand. There were no taxis.

It was December and cold. The air was sharp with the smell of snow. She shivered. *He* always found the taxis—she hated making the necessary peremptory gesture even in the crowded noontime street. She waited twenty minutes until a cab came and she timidly summoned it, timidly got into it. He'd be able to walk to his brother's—it was only two blocks away, she could see the lights of the building from here.

Tired, she sank back against the torn upholstery and watched the city whiz by. The taxi driver was surely doing about sixty in a twenty-five-mile zone, and it was beginning to snow now—that was the most dangerous time to be driving (especially if you were driving too fast) because the first flakes that fell mixed with the oil on the street and made it slippery. But she sat loosely, not caring if she got home in one piece or in a hundred or not at all.

She had thought he would call her back when she walked out of the bar. But he didn't. She had thought he would come out to the taxi stand (he *knew* she was no good at calling cabs) and say, "You silly goose, didn't you know I was just teasing you?" But he didn't.

He meant what he said then and what he had said was unforgivable; that he thought it was accessible to "discussion" made it worse. When he talked about hunting—*killing*—like that, wanted to argue about it as if it were a quadratic equation to which they were seeking the solution—he showed himself to be not the person she had married so happily, so innocently just three months ago. Some things could not be debated and this was one; he was either for or against—he could not be in the middle.

She didn't like being married anyway (she saw that now). It had made her nervous for him to be as important to her as he had been. She worried about him all the time, whenever they were apart. And now that he was so abruptly revealed as the villain of the piece, she felt only relief (she told herself) as though those three months of happy marriage had been suffocating, as though all along she'd been waiting in suspense for him to show her that it was all just fakery and illusion—like everything else in life.

At home she found herself beset by the pathos of his physical possessions, and her heart was broken by the sight of his clothes, his books, the wool scarf she'd tried to make him wear tonight because he had a delicate throat (but he wouldn't!). No, she could not muster even an ounce of worry for him, trudging those two cold blocks through the snow with no scarf—it was his own fault. Anyway, by now he was safe, snug, smug at his brother's, listening to those raucous turned-up-too-loud rock records his brother was so crazy about, sharing with his brother (who always agreed with him) his views on the necessity of killing any animal that could be found, bringing its poor head home to mount on your wall so you could pat yourself on the back, say to your friends, "Look what *I* did."

She took off her clothes, carefully hanging up the new velvet skirt; she'd never wear that again, nor the dangling turquoise and silver earrings he'd given her to go with her blue eyes. He was so dark and she was so fair, they'd never fit together properly (she saw now). She gently folded his fine wool scarf and laid it away in the drawer of her dresser in which she'd put his clothes when he'd moved in. Not that he had many—all those buttonless shirts that she'd never got around to tending to, those mismatched socks

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SUSAN DARTER HUNT lives in Washington, D.C., and "mostly" writes–especially on her first novel.

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and shorts with broken elastic, his one sweater and that was really his mother's, oh it was sad. She freely forgave his possessions. She had seen that conversation coming so many times and always before she had successfully headed it off. Until tonight. . . .

It was cold in the apartment and she dug out from the bottom of a drawer her long flannel nightgown. Although it was the only warm thing she had, she hadn't worn it this winter. It wasn't sexy. Well, that didn't matter now. *He* was at his brother's, drinking bourbon on top of all that champagne—he'd feel terrible tomorrow—and *he* was laughing with his brother while her heart was breaking. Was broken.

The snow fell thick and fast now, the flakes were big and lacy and wet, and they muffled every sound. She stood at the window barefoot; the uncarpeted floor was bitter cold. That was what you got, she thought, for living in an old building with high ceilings and shining parquet floors, poorly kept up, cheap, in the wrong part of town. She sighed.

The street below was deserted, and the white snow-blanket softened the hard outlines of the cars, garbage cans, no-parking signs that everyone ignored. His brother was divorced, lived alone in luxury in a high-rise with wall-to-wall carpeting (even in the bathroom) and central heating which came on when he turned it on instead of like theirs, which came on whenever the landlord decided it couldn't be put off any longer and then the whole apartment smelled like hot radiators and no matter how many windows you opened the air was too hot and heavy to breathe and the plants all wilted. That was what you got when you chose the beauty of a fine old building that had seen better days over a new papier-mâché edifice where, if you got out of the Muzak-filled elevator on the wrong floor, you would never know it until your key didn't turn in the lock of what you had thought was your own front door.

She forgave him because she had loved him so much and (damn it!) still did. But she could never forget what he had said. Someone who could say something like that (and he wouldn't have said it if he didn't believe it, would he? what did he mean by saying that she didn't understand? what explanation could there be?) was not a person she could be married to. They'd be friends—but no, not even that. How could she be friends with him and then some day see him with another woman? Impossible.

She went to bed, leaving the hall light on just in case, leaving the chain off the door just in case—but the snow fell so fast that even if he wanted to (and he didn't) he couldn't come home through it. But if he did come (and he wouldn't) she didn't want him waking her up for more pointless arguing which wouldn't get them anywhere, what was the use?

It was nice to have the bed to herself. She settled down in the exact center of it and spread the blanket over her. It was nice to have so many blankets on the bed. *He* was always throwing them off or pulling them away in his sleep. He was a restless nervous sleeper, prone to bad dreams from which she would wake him and hold him saying, "There, there, it's all right, I'm here" which, in broad daylight, made them laugh. *He* was the resourceful one, aggressive and confident, while she'd always been shy, tentative, intuitive rather than logical. That was why their disagreement was so drastic and why she had (she could admit it to herself) overreacted just a little. But it was for the best. She would never have been able to convince him of the rightness of her side—the reverse was more likely and then she could no longer live with herself. He would want—he *always* wanted—facts and figures and even when she supplied them (making them up if need be) he didn't believe them. He wanted to see them verified in print somewhere. And even if she showed him the figures in black and white, nine times out of ten he'd say that her "source" was unreliable, whatever it was. So it was over—she could not go on living with him, if that's what he believed.

She'd be the gay divorcée and let her hair go grey and her legs unshaven because there could never be anyone else for her.

She was somewhere in the middle of a dream—everyone she loved was dying and she couldn't go to them, couldn't even say goodbye to them because she was frozen in a snowbank and could not move or speak—when the sound of a door being opened woke her. Even without him in the bed, the blankets had somehow sneaked away and were bunched up on his side while she clung to hers shivering. She got up and went to the front door.

He was covered with snow from head to food and it was melting and dripping onto the shining parquet floor. There were red spots on his cheeks which were either from the cold air or from consumption, it was too soon to tell. He was otherwise pale, exhausted, and (he said) won over to whichever side of whatever issue she cared to put forward and, he said, he was ready to sign a pledge to that effect in blood or ice, whichever came first, and he would seal it with tears. He had walked five miles, he said (exaggerating), to get home because there was not a taxi to be found in all of Christendom tonight and he didn't like his brother any more than she did. Could he stay until tomorrow if he slept on a blanket on the floor in that cold corner (and he pointed) by the kitchen?

He went too far. She would have taken him in her arms, snow and all, the moment he came in the door if he hadn't been enjoying his little speech so much. But he'd Uriah-Heeped himself into yet another corner from which she refused to extricate him. She threw onto the couch a pillow and the thick blue quilt her sister had given them for a wedding present. She yanked the beach towel from the linen closet, upsetting a carefully balanced assortment of bars of soap, rolls of toilet paper, sponges, washcloths, bathtowels, lightbulbs, worn-out undershirts to be used for rags, and a pair of pantyhose that didn't belong there anyway. The debris of their lives, she thought, and, leaving it all on the floor, she put the towel on top of the quilt and the pillow, and went into the bedroom, slamming the door behind her.

She lay in the big bed shivering with cold although she had twice as many blankets as usual. Her heart was doing those funny flipflops that the doctor had said was from too much coffee but which she knew was the beginning of a

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heart attack. There wasn't a sound from the living room but she didn't care. He was probably still standing there with that hurt look on his rosy cold face and would be standing there when she got up in the morning. He'd be deathly ill by then but she didn't care.

He would get sick and die, and his mother would never forgive her—*her* mother would never forgive her.

He would *not* get sick and die but they would have a bitter bloody divorce although she would let him have *everything*—just everything they had, even the stuff that was hers. He could have the stereo and all the Joan Baez records. The operas. All the records. The television. The Cuisinart food processor (he was a better cook anyway, he was better at everything). The yogurt maker. The areca palm that she'd had since it was a baby. The eight place settings of silver which her mother had given them with *his* initial on them. She'd be going back to her maiden name anyway. He could keep the apartment. She could not live in it after the divorce—she could not live in an apartment where they'd been so happy, nor even in a city they'd lived in together. She would go to Alaska where she would be too cold to be unhappy.

He would get sick and die if he did not take off his wet coat and his wet shoes and drink some water with a lemon squeezed into it to ward off the cold. He had a delicate throat. But *he* knew about the lemon squeezed into the water. He could do that for himself—if he could find the lemons which she always kept in the fruit compartment of the refrigerator (but *he* said they weren't really fruits, they were flavoring, like mayonnaise).

He would get sick and die, and she would stand in the snow on the hard frozen ground of the cemetery and it would be too late.

If only he hadn't been so Uriah-Heepish. He only did it because he didn't take her seriously; still he should not have walked all that way without his scarf, he had a delicate throat.

He should have stayed with his brother who lived only two blocks from the concert hall which was ironic since his brother did not like that kind of music but only liked that awful hard rock although he did (she had to admit) have a fairly good collection of folk music and would always let her play anything she wanted to hear, turned up as loud as she wanted because the apartments were all sound-proofed. She had to admit his brother was always nice to her; *he* said it was because his brother knew how happy she made him.

Tears, so inappropriate to her state of mind, were rolling down her cheeks. She got out of bed and went into the living room.

He lay on the couch, naked under the quilt and curled up like a kitten, fast asleep. But that's not to say he didn't wake up right away when she put her arms around him and held him close and said, "Forgive me."

"But just let me explain what I meant," he said; she could hear that his voice was getting hoarse already.

"Yes, yes, explain," she said, fitting her body onto the narrow couch, next to his, where it belonged. Wrapping the quilt around them, tucking them into it, she said, "We agree, I know we do."

And, of course, they did. □

RICK ROBBINS

COMING HOME

Something of a morning turns you pilgrim,
light rises from the gloss
off your desk. Out there, dawn is never
slow in coming: saws begin their see-saw whine
lifted to the ocean of the air.
A song you've never heard before, these limbs
scrubbing themselves in breeze,
hammering oil drums, that finch just back
from its nomad winter. Something comes with you
out of sleep, the weak hours—light
slants hard across your desk.

And the window opens when it warms.
And next door, the porch lamp goes out before
a woman parts her drapes. Even with the first
passing siren, those near or finally dead,
you are drawn out to the conference
of it all: a shadow on the lawn, high blue
washed across with clouds.

Your home becomes the house
of a day's first steps. When you walk out, take on
the cold—still in the air—like a jacket
you might buy, you make this pilgrimage
to whatever comes next. Your saint
lies at the far end of shrubbery, a shrine
in the web. At its edge spins the patron
of your morning, preparing
the death of a fly.

Walking away, something is left
behind you, wind through the lines of that home.
In the long weave toward evening
you have made a thousand journeys, and at the inn
where you are lodged, a waiting room
to once more make your own. Wind
through an opening in glass, shuffled
papers on the desk where light fails—
letters bearing home like ships
that script you're never sure belongs to you.

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STEPHEN WEISER

AN INSTANCE OF SPRING IN OREGON

Look! It is today.

The Oregon springsun has bloomed: morning, almost ten o'clock and warm. Never mind the brown stain hanging over the trees, it belongs to the city—Eugene, Oregon, 97400. Beyond, look at the real sky arching over the vast verdant scoop of the Willamette valley, over the pineblue mountains, the waterfalls, the pools. It calls you to the ocean. Hey! I said it's spring: things to bloom as I wave my hand. Trees to pop their buds as I blink. The world to explode. And everyone to be told—I riding through the downtown streets in a station wagon with loudspeakers bolted to it, waving, shouting, entreating: Lay down your pencils, close up your tills, come out with your brown paper bags and eat a ten o'clock lunch on the roofs of cars, march naked to the Willamette and float like pale porpoises to the sea, calling to your kind until the towns are swept away before the flood.

He turned from the porch to his bathroom. It was today even in the peeling gloom. "You're old," he told his reflection, baring his teeth. They looked yellow, surrounded by the virginal white of shaving lather. "You're twenty-eight, man, and you have a wife and child. That's pretty goddamned old!"

In the mirror his wife's face appeared at his shoulder, still dumb with sleep. "Did you say something?"

"I am an old fucker," he nodded.

"Yeah," she smiled.

"Still a graduate student."

"A teaching fellow."

"You are forced to labor because my only contributions are small stipends."

"Not today," she said. "Today is Wednesday, and I have Wednesdays off."

"So it is." He bent to her breast and left a touch of meringue. "And as soon as I finish shaving," he said as she rubbed the meringue into his back, "we are going to get into the car and drive to the mountains."

"Why not the ocean?"

"Everyone goes to the beach when the sun shines. The mountains are Diana—virgin and undisturbed."

"But you have classes."

"But you have the day off."

"I have the washing to do."

"But you're not going to do it."

"It needs to be done."

"Then we'll take it along. You can spend the afternoon beating clothes on a rock at the bank of the stream."

"No," she said."You'll have to choose: me or the wash."

"For some men," he said, "that might be a thorny dilemma."

He called the department secretary and explained that he was wracked with a violent ague, congenital blindness, and paralysis of the heart, which would make it impossible for him to meet his classes today.

"It's really beautiful out," she agreed.

It was still chilly in the mountains, but the dogwood knew it was today. Snow clung to the shadows of cuts and

STEPHEN WEISER has recently come back to the United States after a long residence in the Netherlands.

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cliffs. About an hour east of the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403, they stopped at Sahalie Falls and took possession of the empty parking lot. They went first to the promontory below the falls and lost themselves in the sprayladen roar of eighty feet of writhing wool drawn into an astoundingly blue pool and recollecting itself around mossy rocks and boulders. Hours later the child moved restlessly in its mother's arms. Their faces were cold.

Hand in hand they walked back toward the parking lot, then shuffled down a frosty incline which began the trail looping up to the head of the falls. It was a short, easy climb. He slipped off his rucksack with its soft bundles of food and the wine, and pitched pine cones into the water, leaning out over the bank to watch them disappear in the tangled wool. It was not natural wool, but bleached, brilliant white tinged with blue. Perhaps it was even cotton. Their laughter came in clouds.

About fifty yards upstream was a smaller fall, about five or six feet. The water curled over the top of itself like the translucent fracture edge of obsidian. He helped her up the rise stairstepped with tree roots. Behind the fall was a pool, dark and glassy in the forest light, and beside it he spread groundcloth and blankets. They had been here before, and the rush of water was like the distant songs your mother used to sing sitting at the piano. He unscrewed the cap from the wine and she sliced the bread and sharp Tillamook cheddar. The flavor of earth and turpentine rose around them, the calm transpiration of the forest and the flavor of the wind drifted through the uncountable needles of uncountable pine. The cold crept into their inactivity, and they wrapped themselves in a blanket, sharing the bottle. The child drowsed, sharing their laps.

It is today, and the world is to explode.

They rise, shuck their clothes, and run laughing to the pool. Their teeth chatter and the child cries, but the pantonal swell of Sahalie Falls soothes coldness and fear. They glide through the clear heady water of the pool. The current draws them over the obsidian wall, and they splash in the eddies like hard trout. At the head of the falls they hesitate, then plunge into the soft rush of wool, down into the astoundingly blue pool, down the rapids, down the McKenzie into the Willamette below Eugene, down past Corvallis, Albany, through Salem, Oregon City, laughing into the Columbia under Portland's busy bridges, following powerful currents into the deep and silent ocean. □

LESLIE ADRIENNE MILLER

NEGATIVE

The light flashed and we wound ourselves in darkness,
foreheads pressed against the film like glass.
We float through the black sky on our own breath,
feeling for the plants and evergreen tips with our toes.

The fear, only visible in the negative,
holds my waist with your hands
and flattens, a stain, between our pressed misted bodies.
The worm has been dividing all night
breathing a sour serpent scent out of its rot.
It prevents our fusion and cools the bright symmetry of our kiss
It is a thin line, cleaving our lips from our faces.

The fear is ticking, measuring us
our potential.
I wouldn't recognize myself now, zeroed in the negative
against a landscape of white trees and a black sky.

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JUDITH BETH COHEN is making her second appearance in the NAR. She has been writing from Provincetown.

JUDITH
BETH
COHEN

WEDDING

The wedding takes place in a Catholic church. Never having attended a Catholic wedding, I wear my best Arabic caftan and cover my neck and ears with jewels. Though I am trying to stay off pills, I stuff some anti-depressants in my beaded bag for security. The Jewish groom, my psychiatrist, treated me in the emergency room of the city hospital when I o.d.'d on "downs." Skinny, frightened, he showed me great reverence, knowing, I suppose, that I am descended from a long line of prominent psychiatrists. The day he signed me out, he invited me to his wedding. A graduation present.

His bride's father, a mortician, parks his black limousine in front of the church, where it waits to take the bride and groom away. A strip of black tape hides the name of the mortuary. On the church steps I stand near the groom's reluctant relations.

"To enter a church is a sin," one uncle says.

"That's only for the Orthodox, and we're not Orthodox anymore, so that rule doesn't apply," responds his wife.

Another uncle boasts he is a democrat. "I often go to weddings and funerals in churches. I just sit back and say to myself, "What's a nice Jewish boy like you doing in a place like this?" He looks about sixty.

"I hope he will be happy. He deserves to be happy," says another aunt.

"Thank God his mother can't be here to see him marrying a Catholic. I hope she can rest in her grave today."

"He's a sick boy himself, you know. They removed a large portion of his stomach and he still bleeds a lot. His doctor is here."

"The bride also has her troubles. Just before the wedding, they found something wrong with her uterus. She can't conceive, I think. Her mother was distraught. You know Catholics. But she told them to go ahead with the wedding anyway."

I follow the group as the usher leads them to their pews where I am seated beside the democratic uncle. Three priests celebrate the wedding mass. From the side door enters the groom. Chanted in English, the prayers do not sound like my Bach Cantata records. This disappoints me. A small boy, white-garmented, hands an object that looks like a rattle to the center priest, who carefully pours liquid from one gold cruet to another, still chanting.

"They're making salad dressing," whispers the aunt next to me. The priest on the right shakes his rattle. Pouring continues.

"They sure are busy with their pots and pans up there," hisses a woman two seats away.

My psychiatrist repeats after the priest, "In the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord," causing the row of aunts and uncles behind me to suck their breath in unison. Down the aisle march the married couple. An invisible organist plays the theme song from "Fiddler on the Roof."

"She'd never pass for Jewish," murmers the aunt next to me as the bride's silk brushes our pew.

The night before the wedding I visited my parents. They wish I knew more nice Jewish boys like my psychiatrist. Bad companions; they think that's part of my problem. True, the street people seemed more alive than my fellow medical school classmates, so I dropped out after three months, took a lot of speed, then took downs to come off that and ended up in the looney bin. That, however, is not unusual for our family. My mother spends a good portion of every year on psychiatric wards. She's manic-depressive and warns me not to follow her example. When she's not depressed she attends weddings, gets her hair dyed, and complains about my dirty fingernails. She also tells her relatives what to do, but few of them are left. Most have died, of cancer.

"You're lucky I put up with you. No one else would," says my father to my mother.

"I wouldn't be sick if not for you," says my mother.

"Please continue this conversation after I leave," I say. My brother, also a psychiatrist, left long ago, for California.

We watch Jerry Lewis do the Muscular Dystrophy Marathon. My father phones in a contribution and we wait for our names to be read over the air. They eat Jewish pastries and I swallow anti-depressants.

My father, a psychosurgeon, cuts tiny pieces out of people's brains so they will no longer have seizures or behave violently. Nothing can be done with brains like mine and my mother's, but he is working on it.

Passing as a friend of my psychiatrist's, I ride with the aunts and uncles to the bride's house.

"Look at this nice young lady I have here by me," says the democratic uncle. "Hannah," he addresses his wife, winking at me, "You go find yourself a boyfriend, O.K.? Then, I'll dance with this nice madele. You like to dance?"

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I move my caftaned knee a few centimeters away from his elderly thigh.

"Sure, you know how to do the bump?"

"Bump, oi," he laughs. Hannah directs the driver toward the bride's house where two large cement swans guard the entry.

"Look what the goyim out in front of their houses, Sid," Hannah points.

If not for my narrow caftan, I'd play Leda, straddle the swan. Instead I ask, "Are Buddhists goyim?" She ignores me.

"Aren't you a Jewish girl?" Sid wonders. "You look Jewish, that nose, those dark eyes."

"Part Jewish, part Buddhist," I say.

"Oi vey, we sure are liberal today, Catholics, Buddhists." He nudges me. "I'm just playing with you."

We pass by the wedding invitation hanging laminated from a plaque in the foyer. Down to the rec room the bride's mother leads us, to see the gifts on display. Flowered melmac plates and stainless steel knives flank a crystal bud vase, bordered by a rubber dish drainer.

"They're a very lucky couple," she assures us.

I embrace my psychiatrist, then shake hands with his new wife who is protected by bolts of white satin.

"You're looking well," he says, pleased with himself.

"Have a good time," the bride tells me. "We really want everyone to have a wonderful time."

The reception following the open house takes place at a country club. While we chew our roast beef, we can watch the golfers coming and going in their little motorized carts. Because he is kosher, Sid, the democratic uncle, eats only salad. I overhear the groom's brother and sister discussing the amount of money each guest is worth. They are most impressed by the one who owns eleven Big Boy Drive-ins and is only twenty-three.

Next to me, on his third highball, Uncle Sid leans over.

"Do Buddhists believe in free love?"

"Nothing's free," I say. As the band strikes up "The Girl That I Marry" he tries pulling me toward the dance floor.

"That's not the bump." I point out the window at little motorized carts zipping around the green like wind-up toys. "Want to go for a ride in one of those?"

Sid follows me out the door. I pick a resting cart, he gets in next to me, chuckling. We lurch forward with a jerk as I step on a pedal. Halfway across the green we are flagged down by a Black man with a tiny alligator on his chest.

"Not for wedding guests," he shouts. "Not for the use of wedding guests, only golfers."

"Where were you?" Hannah demands. "Hurry, they want us in the family picture."

Sid leaves me to chat with the groom's brother. We discuss golf. "I prefer skiing to golf," he says. "I sell skis. That's my line of work. I own an interest in some snow making machines."

"I have friends who can make snow, too," I say.

His wife, in blue, joins us by the golf carts.

"Your brother is my psychiatrist," I tell them.

"Oh, how nice," the wife says.

They vanish, joining the crowds being shot by photographers.

"Which shot do you want first, The Generation Shot or The Immediate Family Shot?" the photographers ask the bride and groom. Groups of smiling relatives form, disintegrate. "Take off the Garter," the photographers then demand. Drums and cymbals crash. Guests gather. The bride pulls her white skirts over her knee. Up her leg the groom's fingers inch; they grab the garter, slide it down over her bended knee, beyond her white covered toe. My psychiatrist shuts his eyes and tosses the garter over his shoulder to the accompaniment of guffaws and obscene leers. A group of chortling males fall upon the piece of satin elastic.

"They never do that at Jewish weddings," says Aunt Hannah.

"Most goyim are alcoholics," replies her nearest relative.

After the bouquet is tossed, the boy who caught the garter fastens it to the thigh of the girl who caught the bouquet, and the bride and groom are driven away in the black limousine. One priest shakes hands with the groom's sister, the bride's mother embraces the ski salesman. One of the ushers invites me to dance. As we waltz past Aunt Hannah headed for the door clutching a centerpiece of dahlias to her bosom, I hear her say to Uncle Sid,

"Imagine? He invites his patients to his wedding!"

A hand pats my caftaned behind. I turn expecting to see Sid; instead another priest, his black back to mine, pumps the arm of my psychiatrist's father, himself a psychiatrist. My own partner admires my now rather wrinkled Arabic garment, and we discuss his work.

"Great strides are being made in the drugless treatment of psychotics," he says, leading me toward a darkened corner of the emptying country club ballroom. □

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Wild Should Wild Remain.

"Man always kills the thing he loves, and so we the pioneers have killed our wilderness. Some say we had to. Be that as it may, I am glad I shall never be young without wild country to be young in."

ALDO LEOPOLD

"Integrity is wholeness, the greatest beauty is organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty of the universe. Love that, not man apart from that...."

ROBINSON JEFFERS

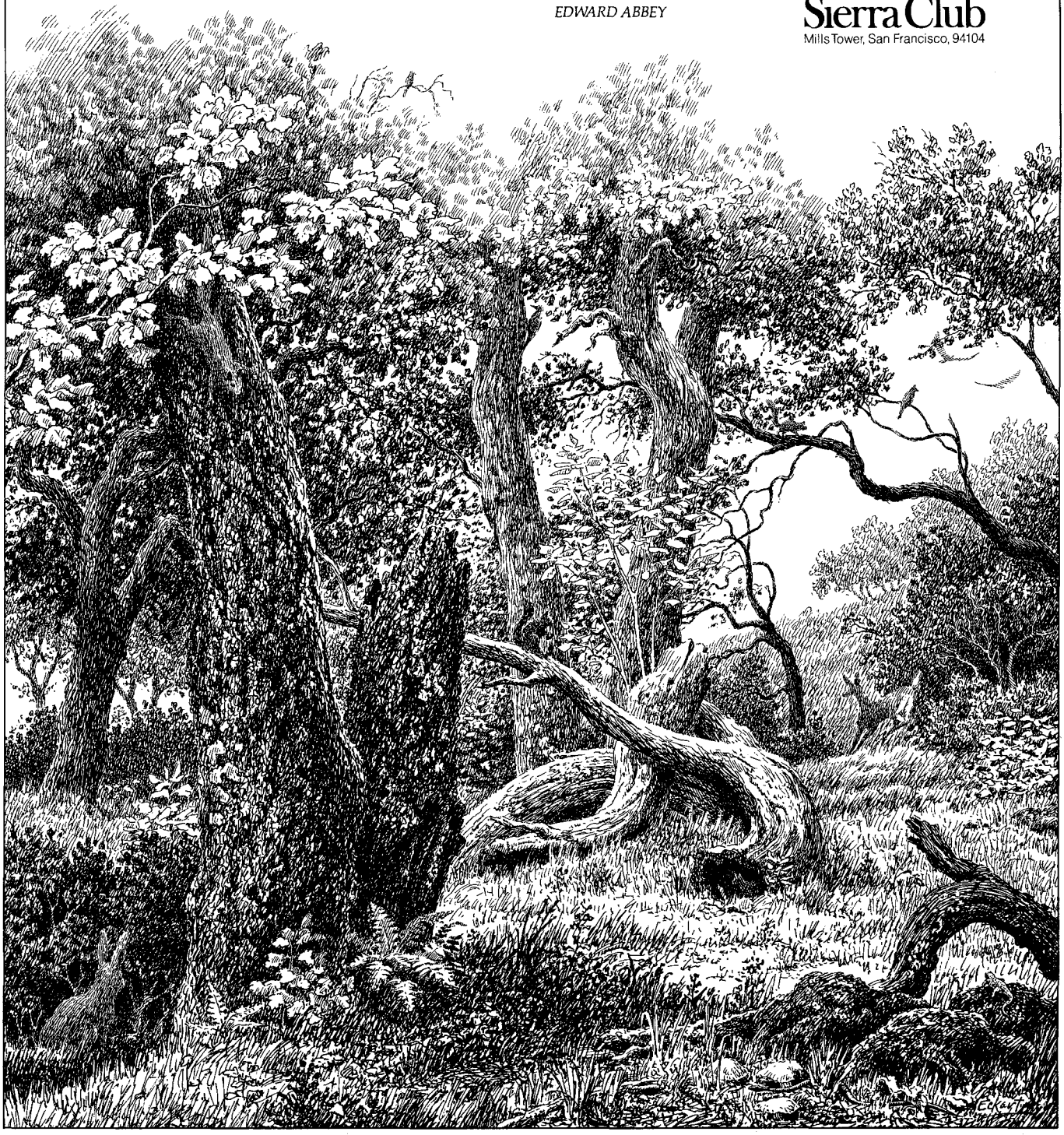
"The love of wilderness is more than a hunger for what is always beyond reach; it is also an expression of loyalty to the earth, (the earth which bore us and sustains us), the only home we shall ever know, the only paradise we ever need—if only we had the eyes to see."

EDWARD ABBEY

"We need wilderness preserved—as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds... It is important to us... simply because it is there—important, that is, simply as an idea."

WALLACE STEGNER

Sierra Club
Mills Tower, San Francisco, 94104



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At last—sensible book reviewing

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THE POETRY RACKET

Before (22 Oct 77)

When the NAR suggested I write about my experiences at the Poets' Tennis Tournament, I said, "Ridiculous!" What could I possibly say about it afterwards?

When I thought of writing about the events *before* they took place, I said again, "Ridiculous!" And at that moment, I knew my theme. For, while poetry may be sublime, the idea of eight American poets arriving at a ranch in Arizona to play a tennis tournament is, of course, ridiculous.

Which makes it, first, appealing and, second, plain fun.

I leave for Arizona in four days. Eight of us will meet in the Phoenix Airport, in the Governor's Room Lounge ("under the large mural"), from where we will be taken by van to the Wickenburg Ranch, a resort for tennis, horses, and one's just dessert. (I hope to go into the just desert just with a guide.)

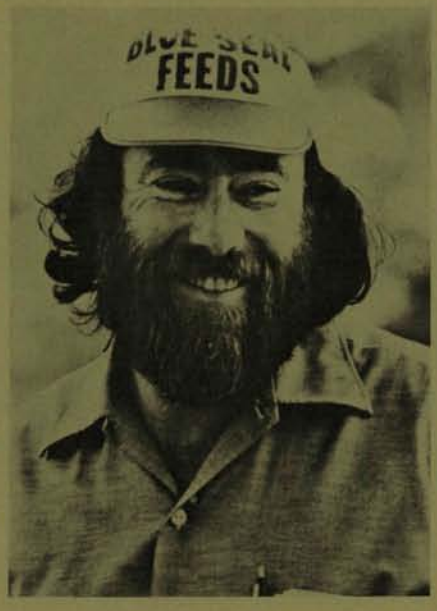
The poets: from Georgia, Coleman Barks; from Iowa, Bell; from New Jersey, Stephen Dunn; from California, George Keithley; from Vermont, Galway Kinnell; from Colorado, William Matthews; from Utah, Dave Smith; and from the condition called Chicago, Ross Talarico. The seedings are the result of rumor and *braggadocio*, in which I participated enthusiastically. I am seeded last. I have obtained for the tournament a shirt reading LAST SEED, so that there will be no mistake. I thought of having the other side read WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?, but I am told that PBS might videotape some of these events and I am afraid of receiving their answer.

In the meantime, I have had my racket re-gripped and re-strung. The local ex-tennis coach of the University says that I will find these new strings "more resilient." He can tell by giving them a ping with his fingers. There's no way I will be able to tell.

I use a Head Competition racket, the one which is sometimes called the "Silver Ashe," because Arthur Ashe uses a racket like mine. I have it strung fairly tightly, about 60 lbs.' worth, but I don't always use the strings. In fact, the best thing about the racket is its frame shots. These, unlike my ground strokes, are always deceptive.

On the other hand, I have heard of *all* of the tennis strokes—the forehand, backhand, volley, half-volley, overhead, serve and lob—and I have every intention of trying some of them soon. Where is it writ that the serve and the lob must be different?

Because I write what is called "free verse," I had thought of asking to play in the Robert Frost Division. Frost, you will remember, said that writing free verse is like playing tennis without a net. (Actually, writing free verse is like playing jai alai without a net, I would tell him, but I doubt he'd get the joke.)



And it would be tempting to title this piece "Anyone for Tennyson," but that title has been taken for a syrupy educational television show produced in Nebraska.

Lord, how I dislike that program. It's just what poetry is always shown to be in popular literature: silly and private. Mention poetry and everyone begins to whisper or emote, while the pussy willows start waving in the background.

That, of course, is the point. Eight of us are going to go play tennis in Arizona, not to prove we are manly, but in total indifference to the sillier images of the poet. Some poets would have us believe that they are special and better. The Philistines (go Big Red) would convince us that poets are special and worse. It would be worth thinking sometime, as we stand in another of those cultural gatherings checking our watches, just who it is at the party who is special when everyone is special.

Meanwhile, back at the Ranch, we will hold a singles tournament (round-robin, one pro set, tie-breaker at 8-8), a doubles tournament (elimination, two sets to win), and possibly a poet-Ranch guest doubles tournament (exhaustion, forfeit at any time). From there we will go to Arizona State University, and then to the University of Arizona, to give group readings and take part in panel discussions. We hope to be thoroughly whipped at one or both schools by the local women's teams and, if they agree to play us, we will be.

On the eleventh day, some of us will start home. In Denver, where I have a layover of 4½ hours, I will be met by novelist Seymour Epstein. We plan to go to his tennis courts for a revenge match. The revenge he has in mind, I believe, is for the last overhead he tried against me. It was three summers ago, on the clay courts at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. Taking aim at a short lob, he peeked at me (I was at the net in doubles, vulnerable, trusting, innocent), and swung an underhanded overhead in my direction. (I had fallen to my knees, beseechingly.) And that is when his racket snapped in two.

He had underestimated the power of the Muse. Is Guillermo Vilas a fiction writer? Of course not.

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After (6 Nov 77)

I begin my report with toffee and chocolate kisses, for they were the highlight, placed on our pillows each evening when the maids would turn down our beds at the Ranch. These also provided controversy, crime, confession and delight when it was discovered by Talarico that his roommate, to be identified only as G. K., had been swiping his toffee and kisses.

The next-best *thing* at the Ranch was certainly the electric carts. Driving them around the hills of the Ranch, we looked like extras in Patrick McGoohan's old television series, "The Prisoner." Except that we drove *fast* (fast enough to overtake the maids and hold them up for toffee and kisses).

Of course there was a hayride ("You get to the cook-out or you don't get supper."), and three guitar players singing such outdoors favorites as "Up Against the Wall, Redneck Mother." But the main thing was tennis: three full days of muscles growing sorer. In the singles final, Stephen Dunn defeated Galway Kinnell. PBS had defaulted, but there at courtside appeared one Barry Briggs of *South Shore* who somehow broadcast the singles final into a cassette recorder! *En route,* Kinnell and Talarico had hatched a new, fiendish doubles scheme, which had us changing partners every set to determine final pairings. In the end, Dunn and Kinnell defeated Barks and Keithley.

In addition, the poets were asked (by me) to select one of two categories for themselves: "Major Poet-Minor Tennis Player" or "Minor Poet-Major Tennis Player." Although these labels were hypothetical on all counts, some players are still deciding.

Most amazingly, despite Keithley and I having blown a cart tire while driving up and down a mountain, despite the hungrier among us sometimes ordering two dinners apiece, and despite the flaws in our service, not to say our tennis strokes, the Ranch wants us back. We had arrived, as it happened, during an administrative reorganization. Therefore, there had been no time for a guest-poet tournament and no requirement that we do anything to earn our *casitas*, food, courts and horses. Next time, it is said, we will give a reading.

You see, it gets serious. What seemed a joke turns out to be a fine gathering. The tennis was nothing. And we had all realized it, it turns out, from the beginning. The fact is that we liked one another and got together throughout the trip as much as possible. In Tempe and Tucson our housing was necessarily scattered, but we joined when we could. There were readings and panels, photographers and journalists, poets from the area and parties. But what impressed me again and again was the good nature of the gatherings. I'm only too sure there were paranoids somewhere in the cactus forests. But they were not among us. By contrast, I can remember any number of poetry festivals where each poet tried to upstage the other and/or where the participants tried to be special by being rude. This time, there was no one among us who lacked, to my mind, either humor or humility.

I would guess that, among the tennis playing poets, there would be unanimous or near-unanimous agreement that poetry is, in one sense, play—serious play. Taking it further, because the equipment used in such play is common to us all, the identification of poet and reader can be almost total. The best result? Recognition of our similarities.

I believe, in fact, that the nature of the artist in our society has been changing. While eccentric stars may be fewer and fewer, the chance for poetry to convey human values may be increasing. I realize that many people feel that the only humane value poetry can convey is a respect for precision. I feel that it can do more. I feel, and have always felt, that poetry has content.

Most people know that poetry has content. It is only among literary critics and, alas, poets that one finds a pre-emptive concern with form. One day at the Ranch, the man in charge of their excellent food service approached me to talk about deeply emotional, and perhaps psychic, events in his life. He seemed to feel, as Freud and Jung before him, that the poets were on to something. One question: What is it? Is it only a method of organizing experience, or does it discover and create experience? Is it, at its best, an assignment of value: linguistic, intellectual, emotional, psychological and moral? And here's the hard one: Does everyone but literary people know this?

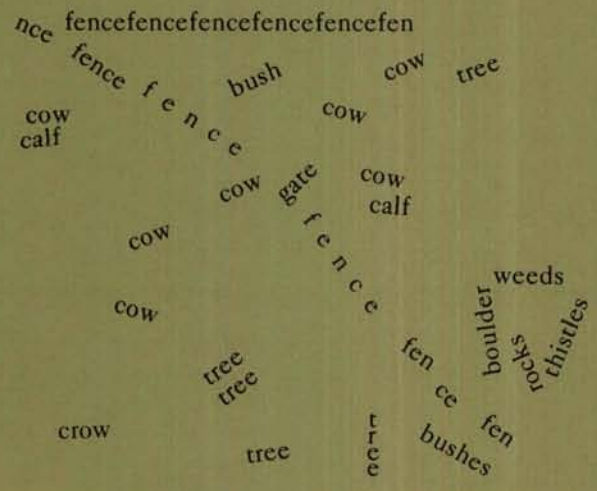
Perhaps the inventors of new techniques are, perforce, individual and willful even to the point of personal inhumanity. We forgive them because their gifts help humanity in general. In that case, in poetry we have inventions enough.

Finally, can a small, silly event such as a poets' tennis tournament be taken as a symptom of humane acculturation and a promise of a world of literary content? It can be by me. But then I believe with Kierkegaard that humor is a sign of religion and I have, in any case, a habit of worrying these small occasions into reports of belief.

— *Marvin Bell*

JOHN WISTEY

IOWA LANDSCAPE



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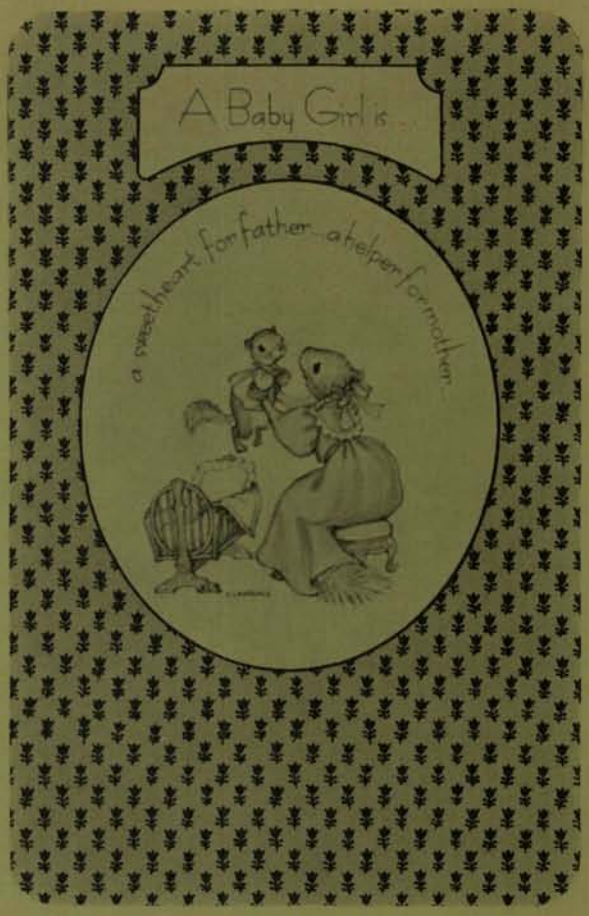
WHEN YOU CARE ENOUGH TO OFFEND. . .

Sexism in greeting cards: stereotyping with hearts & flowers

If it is the case that California women's groups were able to prove the sexist innuendo of a Marlboro cigarettes billboard (which showed a virile male with the Marlboro package, and carried the caption "He likes the box.")—and therefore to have the billboard ads taken down—then the greeting card industry is surely vulnerable for its own subtle tradition of role-stereotyping, as the selection on these pages seems to argue.



It all begins, say the women, with birth—in this instance with congratulatory cards from friends of the parents. The card above seems to propose that the mother-daughter relationship is menial, while the father-daughter bond is an affectionate dispensation of Daddy's; the one below (at left is the card's outside, its inside at right) makes a boy comrade to the father, but someone for the mother to "adore"—and nowhere is it suggested that the boy-child will be of any help to anybody. (Both cards are by American Greetings.) The Hallmark card on page 45 carries the

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She's a little doll in diapers,
A princess in a bonnet,
A tiny lady in a gown
With lace and ribbons on it!
She's a belle in small pink booties,
A pinup, baby size--
And all the while you're certain
She's an angel in disguise!

Congratulations and Best Wishes
To All of You!

stereotyping a step further by proposing that the newborn girl is already a "pinup" (albeit miniaturized)—reminding the parents, generously, that women may be useless & vapid when they aren't being functional. With the birthday cards at left and right, also from Hallmark, parents may reinforce the self-images of their children—the boy as harum-scarum knockabout mischief-maker, the girl as docile & demure mother material.

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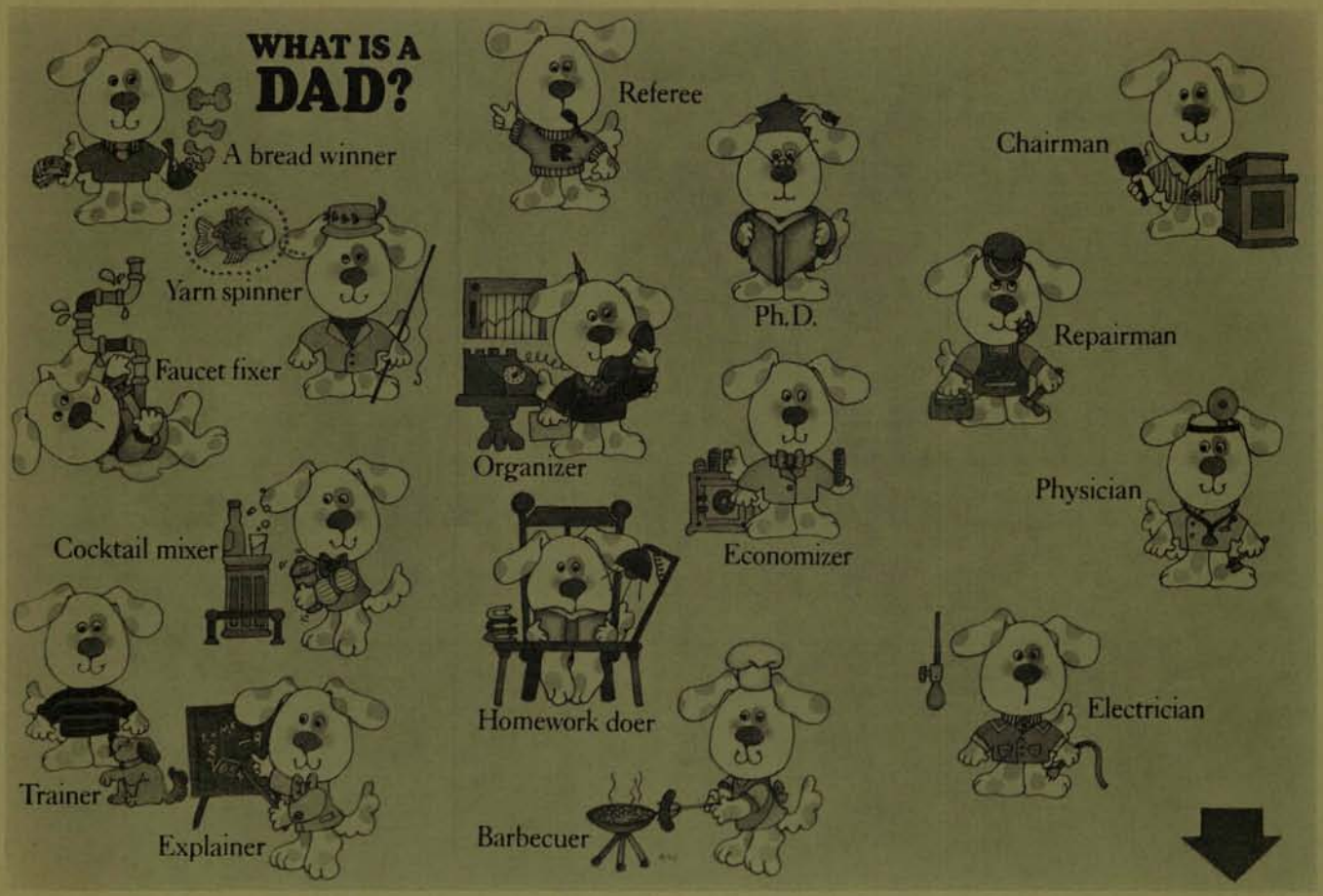

In fact, the stereotyping seems never to end. Here the children (now old enough to pick out their own birthday cards for parents) distinguish mother from father by their activities and "jobs." The mother sews, scours, sweeps, cooks, dusts, takes out the garbage—as you'd expect from a good servant—while the father moves in a larger and varied world; the only useful work a man performs around the house, imply these American Greetings cards, is on the order of tinkering with the plumbing, while a woman never performs *except* around the house.

Matters begin to get worse with cards exchanged between adult men and women. Not only is the woman demeaned (in the card at the top left of page 47) by being reminded of all the traditional notions of female weaknesses and frivolities—vanity, extravagance, poor driving ability, argumentativeness—and sneered at (at the right) for

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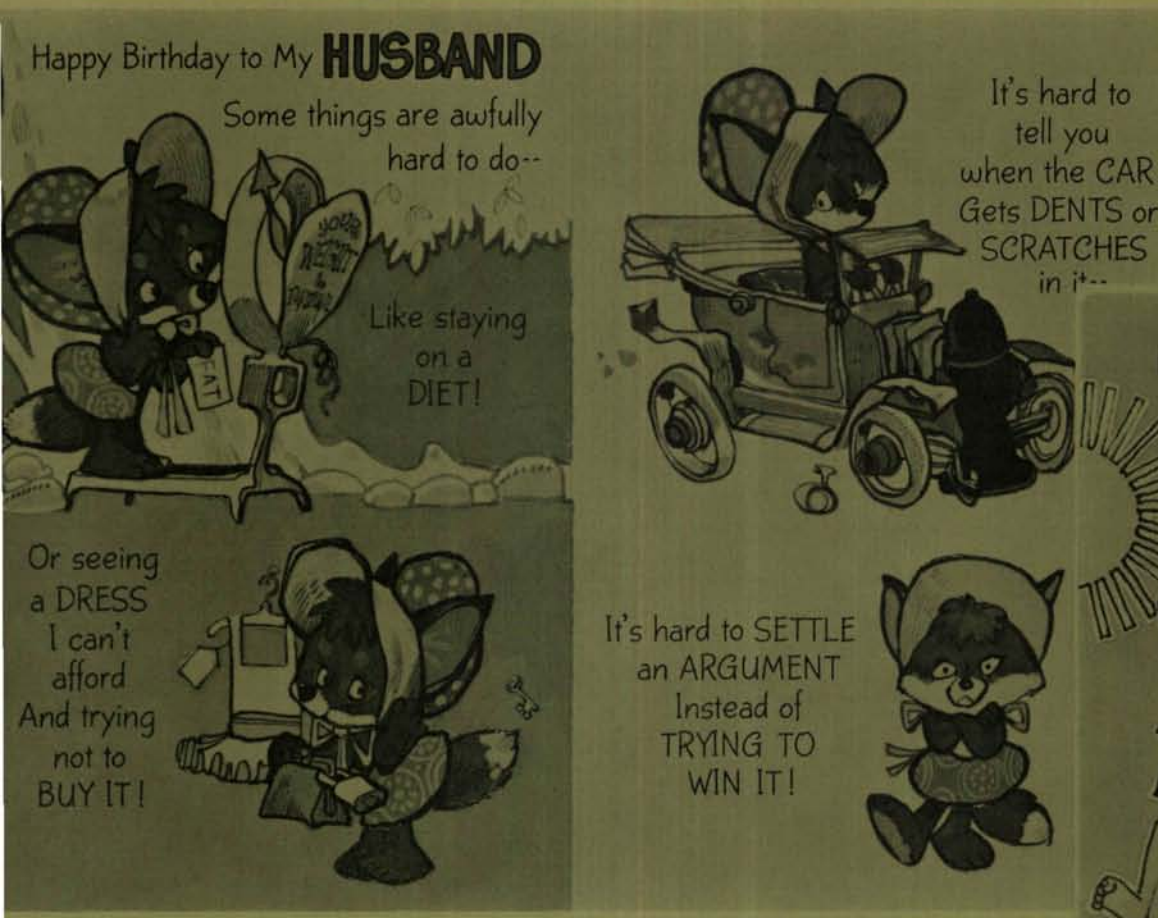
Happy Birthday to My HUSBAND
Some things are awfully hard to do--
Like staying on a DIET!
It's hard to tell you when the CAR Gets DENTS or SCRATCHES in it--
Or seeing a DRESS I can't afford And trying not to BUY IT!
It's hard to SETTLE an ARGUMENT Instead of TRYING TO WIN IT!

looking frowsy in the morning, but even when the cardmakers (all three of these are from Hallmark) nod in the direction of "liberation," it turns out on Valentine's Day that the liberation is on sufferance of the male.

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Finally, the crowning stereotypes of love and marriage: the reduction of the female to the status of sex object (the inside caption of the Hallmark card below reads: "You still have what it takes to make me look twice!")—as the card is opened, the skirt rides up and the husband's eyes look under it; the admission to the husband that the wife accepts her reputation as chatterbox (in the Hallmark offering at right); and the Norcross image (below, right) of the woman as housekeeper even in a regal setting (with the husband, not incidentally, as dreamboat). Ah, sentiment.

–Janet Adams

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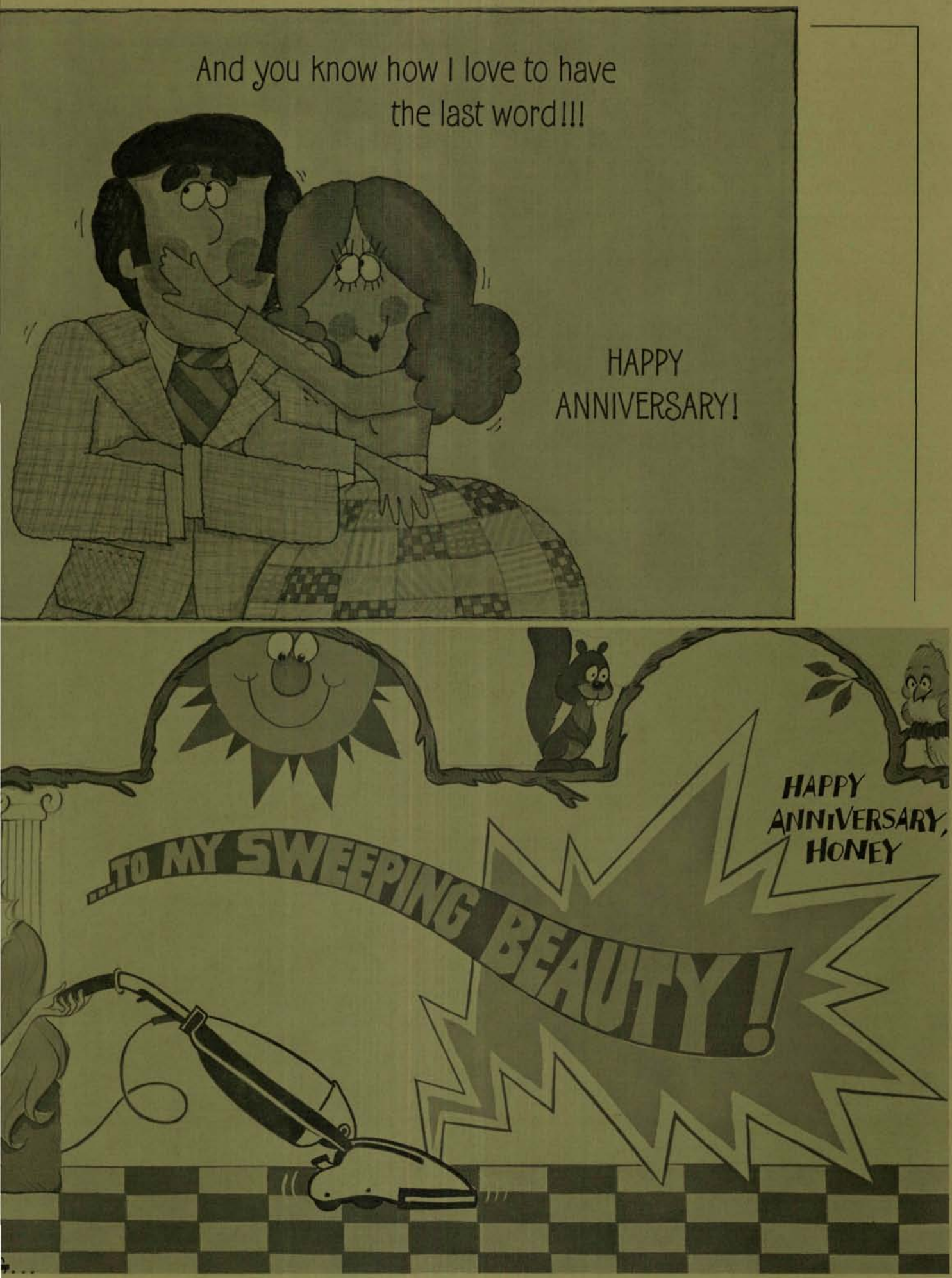

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AT HOME WITH GASTROPODS

A Nineteenth Century Interior, in Translation

My best friends are two land snails. I feel very close to them sometimes; we each share all that we have, all that we know and are. They slide around slowly, up the mantlepiece and down. I sit or pace in my rooms, agitated, picking up and putting down a wooden recorder, changing my shirt, hefting by turns a china lamp, a leather boot, trying to joke with the snails. One is tannish; one is yellowish. They differ—the yellowish one is more. . .oh, if they were very different, if one were, say, a musician, wry, and one a muscular philosopher, say, what society I would enjoy! For the plain fact is, if you insist on it, that they are very much alike. So much alike that, for all practical purposes, an outside observer, and even, to be perfectly frank, I myself, would have to call them identical, more or less. Quiet.

After I have spent some time absorbed in the snails and their ways (their names, incidentally, are of no concern here), occasionally, or, in fact, almost always, I am struck by the incongruity of the picture we must present. I am, after all, a human being, and, as such, almost six feet tall, minus an inch or so. I line up the snails on my palm and inspect the ranks, carrying them to my eye, while one snail or another retracts and protrudes first one feeler, then another; I wait till all four of the knobby bulbs on their feeler tips are fully extruded and plump, till they are well forward, supplied with a dark drop of blood, and calm. . .and then I see myself suddenly and think, "I treat my friends too curiously, too curiously for words!" and I put them under the philodendron, disgusted, and leave, walk to the newsstand, glare at the owner behind the counter with his obtrusive little mouth, or chat with him; and buy the foulest cigars at any price and carry a dozen to my rooms, triumphant.

Or I say to the snails, "Friends, children, illiterates, you imbecilic nubs," (and I stroke the furls of their feet, which recoil, curling, like tickled lips)—"The trouble with you, the ridiculous, ludicrous thing about both of you is, *you are too short.*" Short! Look at them! It is unheard-of to be so short! I literally cannot bring myself to believe it. Once this notion takes possession of me, as it has, I confess, now, the inappropriateness of the snails' height, which at first seems so marvellously comical, takes on a lunatic air, the smack of cosmic incongruity; it is an anomaly so endlessly comical that the very length of its humor pierces the bounds of the mind's rim and touches the Mystery Itself. It is too much to think about, and far too much to explain, that these snails are so impossibly short. Sometimes I have taken a kettle from the fire and thrown it through a window; sometimes I jump on my own foot, I bite my finger, I break a framed painting over the skull of a pedestrian (once); I *throw* things; I do, actually, love to throw many things. Because the world is so astonishing, the snails—to take one of many possible examples—are so short, and it is too much for me to think about alone. Or, for that matter, at all.

But on many fine mornings I do not, quite frankly, concern myself too much with the Mystery. And by controlling the depth of my thinking very carefully, I allow myself a little joke. "Good morning," I say to each snail in turn—to the tannish one looking dead on the hearth, slowly turning her gelatinous head; to the half-dead yellowish one who rides a trail of slime up a window like Botticelli's Venus afloat on a frilly foot—"Good morning," I say, narrowing my eyes, "*Shorty.*"

And a good morning it may well be; some—many—are.

– Annie Dillard

BODY PARTS

Why identify body-parts?

Ask the mailman, ask the grocer, ask anyone who has become involved in this rewarding and fast-growing pastime. Ardent "body-part hounds" are to be found in practically every community across the land, oftentimes banding together in clubs and renting a hall somewhere. And whether they specialize in photographing body-parts, or training them, or simply talking about them, all these clubs welcome new members to share in their slide shows and sing fests.

Any pastime that is expanding this fast, appeal-

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ing to people of all ages and occupations, must possess some strong points. Indeed, body-parts identification does have exceptional advantages to recommend it. Body-parts are cheap. Body-parts are portable. If you have been looking for a hobby that requires no special equipment, that you can do indoors or out, in any season of the year, ask yourself this question:

"Why NOT identify body-parts?"

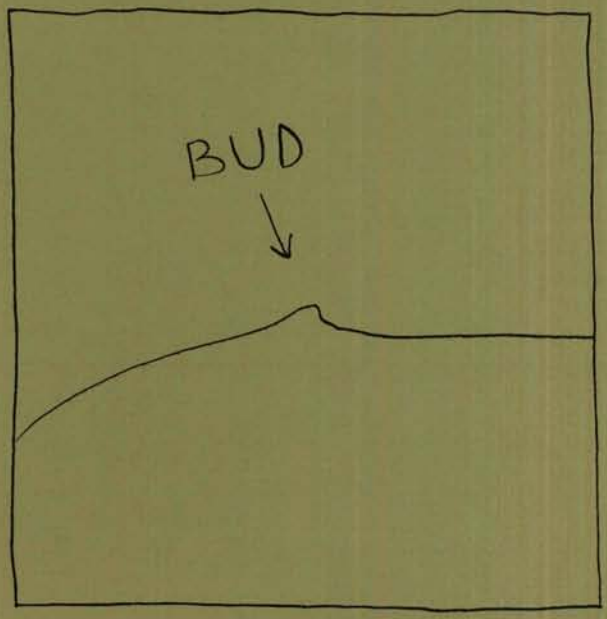
Body-parts are far less creepy than most people suppose. Reports of them turning on their masters are laughably untrue. Contrary to what the press has been telling us, body-parts are gentle and peace-loving. Body-parts brighten a room, they absorb noise, they help cushion the fall of priceless *objets d'art*. They are affectionate.

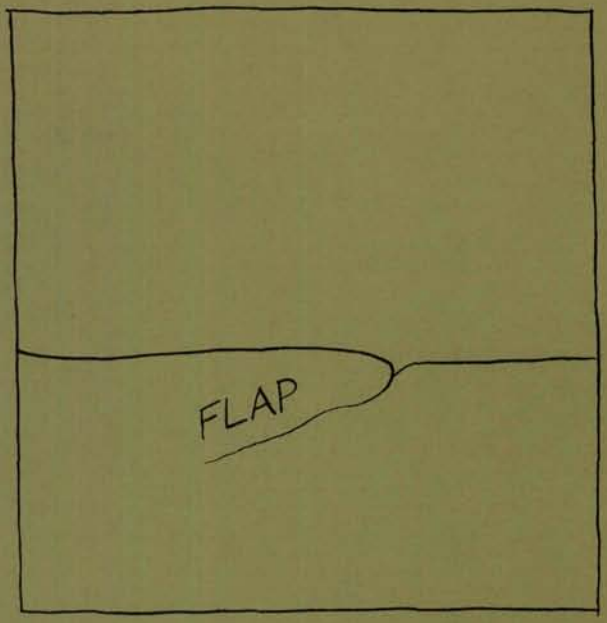
Remember, as infants each and every one of us enjoyed a spontaneous and natural affinity with our body-parts. It was only as we grew older and witnessed the prudishness of our elders that we came to look upon our body-parts as strange, disquieting things . . . things to be feared and avoided . . . if not tarred, feathered, and abandoned for dead in a roadside ditch.

But how to start?

The best way to take up this pastime is to observe body-parts right where they are growing. Beginners can learn more from an hour with live body-parts than a day with dead, dried ones.

An example will illustrate. Until recently the beginner was taught to identify his Kauffman-LaRue by having him remove it from its station. He was instructed to place the Kauffman-LaRue on a table before him. With a pointer he was asked to locate the various zones of the Kauffman-LaRue as it grew increasingly resentful. In contrast, today's beginner is immediately introduced to his Kauffman-LaRue . . . on its home territory. The result: he has found in his Kauffman-LaRue a friend for life.





You may say: "But all body-parts look alike. How can I tell the difference between them?"

The answer is: All body-parts do not look alike. Small but important distinctions abound. Establishing these distinctions is a skill that comes with practice. Look closely for wrinkles, dimples, flaps and buds. Then look at the body-part's general form so that gradually you will come to recognize it at a distance. Observe its habits. Does it twitch? Does it tremble? What stimulates it to move? Does it *enjoy* moving? Bear in mind that even the most aloof, stand-offish body-part will yield basic data to the beginner, and its value should by no means be discounted. The more widely you look, the more widely you will see, and the more enthralling will be your personal experiences. Friends of all sexes will long to listen to your adventure yarns, and who knows what fringe benefits won't evolve from that!

A warning. Don't let your new popularity blind you to the less glamorous aspects of your pastime. Good grooming is a must for identifiers of all rank. Most body-parts can be cleaned in soapy warm water applied with an ordinary household sponge. After drying and labelling a body-part, you should then enumerate it in a note book or card file, including the date and any thoughts as to its condition. A well-ordered cataloguing system will be a quick reference for you to use again and again, and will help clear up the good-natured disputes that sometimes pop up during the heat of competition.

Of course, as in any young field, there is always the possibility that you will spot a body-part no one ever spotted before. Talk about excitement! If this should happen, you will be allowed to choose the name by which it will be known forevermore. Choose carefully, for the opportunity is a rare one. Imagine immortalizing your favorite rugby team! Or advertising your store!

—Daniel Asa Rose

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HOW TO BEAT DETROIT . . .

. . . AT ITS OWN GAME

My name is Carl Drayton, and I had this little brochure printed at my own personal expense, because I've had some time on my hands, and I am disgusted. Friend, if you're one of those people—and who isn't these days—whose dollar just don't go as far as it once did, I'm willing to bet that you got a darn good idea how much that bucket of bolts sitting in your garage sets you back each month. (Month, hell—each *day*.) If you think Detroit is going to help you out, you got another think coming. They built a more economical car in 1950 than they do now. There's a lot of these people in the paper and also these government wise guys that will tell you one thing or another, but they're making $30,000 a year, easy, and don't know straight up. You take carpooling, for example. Who needs it? They show on the tv these dumbos all chatting so happy—what do they think we are out here, nitwits? Nobody is that happy at 8 a.m., leastways nobody with good sense. It's all I can do to see that yellow line. And you crowded into a car with three, four other grouches—how about the pipe smoker, or some guy snoring, or the religious nut? Shove it, Feds.

Folks wants to stick to the private car because it is private. Where else you going to get 20, 30 minutes a day to yourself? No old lady, no kiddies, and you don't have to talk up sweet to the boss yet. Play the radio and think you're 18 again, am I right? I tell you. Let's keep the private car. But let's make it right. And if they're not going to do it back East, let's do it ourselves! Ever since my book come out (I still have some copies, by the way, you look at the end for particulars) the mail has just been pouring in with ideas on how to solve the problem yourself. Here are some of the best ones.

THE SPONGER

Bobby Dreedle of Elk Springs, Missouri writes that he put a 3.5 hp Briggs & Stratton lawn mower engine in his 1969 Camaro. By adding a turbocharger and a specially-designed, 8 foot in diameter air cleaner, patent applied for, he can go from zero to 60 in 7 seconds. Gas mileage? He don't need gas at all! Says Bobby: "I got these fiberglass tubes that come up out of my air cleaner whenever I am behind a big truck. They stretch out and suck in the truck's exhaust. That's what I burn, see, and boy, will she move."

I asked him if wasn't that kind of dangerous.

"Oh sure, but I like performance, you know. Ordinary fellow, he could just run her off the air, most places."

Put that in your pipe and smoke it, Detroit!

THE STANLEY FOAMER

Mary Lee Cooper, from DeWitt, Texas, has come up with a variation on the old Stanley Steamer. A regular customer of McDonald's, she often lamented the fact how so much perfectly good styrofoam, which they use to keep their hamburgers warm, is thrown away. She developed a burner that works good on styrofoam, replaced the engine in her Maverick with a boiler, and off she went, steam-powered.

Mary Lee's exhaust drops back to a box in the trunk in the form of a grey powder. She dumps it down between the studs of her tidy, 3-bedroom home, for insulation.

"If you ever get to Texas," Mary Lee says, "you come see me. If I'm not at home, come on out to McDonald's. You'll see me out there most every day, rooting in the trash like a razorback. The kids all call me, 'Trash Lady.' "

For an idea how to make beautiful jewelry out of styrofoam, see Chapter Four of my book, "Big Government and the Throwaway Society."

THE BANDWAGON

Dawson Bowles, of Kearney, Nebraska, tells how he designed and installed a rubber band motor in his 1963 Peugeot. He mounted three cranks on the dash, which each wind two bands of his six-band motor. A and F bands are cranked as B and E reach their halfway point, and C and D windings are nearly unwound. Then C and D are cranked tight again, etc., assuring steady "firing."

"It's a little tough to steer and keep everything wound up," Bowles says. "But hell, I had a boy working for me last year that got that Peugeot up to 52, and it wouldn't do that when it was new. Yeah, I had 14 bandwagons around here at one time, but then I sold them all to a company in Japan."

And what about Japanese competition? Is American knowhow being undermined by our dependence on big government? Read Chapter 12 of my book, "How Big Government Caters to Foreign Competition."

THE PLASTIKO

Weighing only 112 pounds, Mark Drabble's Plastiko, now on the California market, is the world economy champ by any yardstick. The engine, at 4 pounds 3 ounces, is a high-performance magnesium-titanium alloy inspired by the engine in Yamaha chainsaws. It develops an amazing 64 hp for almost two weeks. The rest of the car, a one-seater, is constructed entirely of high-impact Nytoshu plastic.

Plaudits to Mark Drabble. The question is, why couldn't Detroit have done this? They could have. They didn't *want* to. For an inside glimpse of politics in Detroit, and how your so-called public servants in Washington aid and abet profiteers, see Chapter 19 of my book, "Those Idiots in Motor City."

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THE NEVER CAR

Not long ago, I went from door to door in Detroit trying to interest the fatcats in my own project, the Never Car. Anybody with an objective mind would agree that my Never Car is a designer's dream, as well a complete, everyman answer to energy and environmental questions. "You're kidding," said Detroit.

I'll tell you how the Never Car works, and see if you don't think they're nuts out there. (You can convert your own car to a Never Car—I don't care, I'm just trying to help out the average joe. See the chapter in my book, "The Working Man and the Nightmare of Inflation and Big Government.") I used a 1964 Studebaker Lark—there was a car, let's hear it for South Bend—but any car will do. Rip out the engine, tear out the grill.

Okay. Get yourself an Army surplus 32-volt electric motor, like they used in WWII to open bomb-bay doors, and then you got to machine a piece to adapt up from the motor shaft to the flange that comes out from your U-joint. (You don't use the transmission, since your speed is rheostated. For complete plans, send $25 to the address below.)

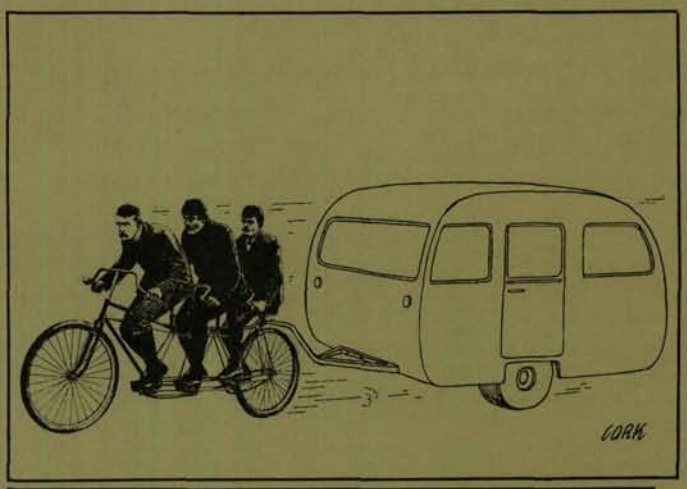
Put in your batteries. I have six by the firewall, 12 where the back seat was, and ten more in the trunk. Now here's the good part. The problem with electric cars is that the batteries run down too quick, am I right? I got that licked. Buy yourself two metal chicken feeders, and mount a fanblade in each one. Then mount a series of step-up pulleys behind the blades (that is, the blade itself is attached to a large pulley, you run a V-belt to a small pulley, which is attached to a large pulley, then you run another V-belt to a small pulley, which is attached to a large pulley, until, Zippo, lights every time, you got your rpm's up, brother, am I right?) so that finally each chicken feeder is generating electricity. Mount the feeders where your grill was, and connect them to your batteries, and down the road you go in your Never Car, you never stop, it's perpetual motion.

A person can see why Detroit wasn't interested. They're dumb, that's why. But I am still puzzled why ERDA turned me down. Not a penny. They just dropped me a line, saying, "We wish you every success with your project."

But friends, their loss is your gain. I'm going public with the Never Car; you can buy shares at a ridiculous $75 each. No limit. But you better act now—it won't be long before you see the Never Car coming down your street.

If you're like me, though, what with the inflation, you maybe don't have $75 to spare. So here's what I'm going to do. You can help get the Never Car into production and solve our country's problems by sending for my book, a good book that will help you in your personal life, that's only $12.95 plus $2 handling, only $14.95 for *Getting Along with the Internal Combustion Engine and Other Corporate Frauds,* send check or money order to Highways and Byways Press, Blissful, Missouri 65809.

Thanks a million. *–John Mort*



Announcing a New Department in the NAR:

READERS RECOMMEND

An informal, unbiased, unpolitical, and (especially) unpaid form of book review

We're finally facing up to the problem of book reviewing: There are too many books being published, and most of them aren't any good. How to sort through them? The answer is another question: How do you (constant reader) discover most of the good things in your life—the best dentist, the least expensive grocery store, the most satisfying whisky, the one good movie in town? Of course; word of mouth. Friends tell you; you overhear a conversation on a bus; like that. Here's how we hope it will work:

In occasional issues of the NAR we'll set aside a portion of the back of the magazine for a column called *Readers Recommend.* In it we will publish reader opinions about books they've read. Nothing professional, you understand. Just the words of readers like yourselves who have read a book, liked it, and want others to share the pleasure.

Do it. We welcome all informal "reviews," from all quarters, but (please) not to exceed 200 words. Be sure to start with the correct title of the book, the publisher, the price. (If it's an old book, one that you've just belatedly happened across, let us know the publication date, too; publishers nowadays are quick to remainder and/or pulp, so we ought to check before we print the review.)

Seriously: no payment—but we will send you two copies of the NAR that contains your review. This may not work; it may be one of those awful ideas that editors are always coming up with. But until it proves to be a failure, let all of us hear from you about the books that excite you.

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My good Friend,

you don't know me

but I know you. and if you

know what's GOOD

FOR you you just listen.

Don't let the energy crisis squeeze you!

We don't know gas like THE

old gas won't be back.

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Listen, FRIEND...
Congratulations on The baby!
you are really Lucky
YOU LIVE in America! 1963
THIS priceless heritage!
YOU Could Be IN Chile! 1964
we are one of a kind.

In 1976 ITT increased its dividend for the 13th consecutive year—that's only one measure of our remarkable performance.

No wonder our competition hates us. SO listen,

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think again. Welcome to A good TIME!

Introducing an alternative AMERICA.

We like gas as much as you do. It's a gift...

Let the sun shine on. understand?

treat yourself to A great discovery. THE MUSIC OF Fuel!

ON SALE NOW!

AT A PRICE YOU CAN AFFORD TODAY

You're in America.

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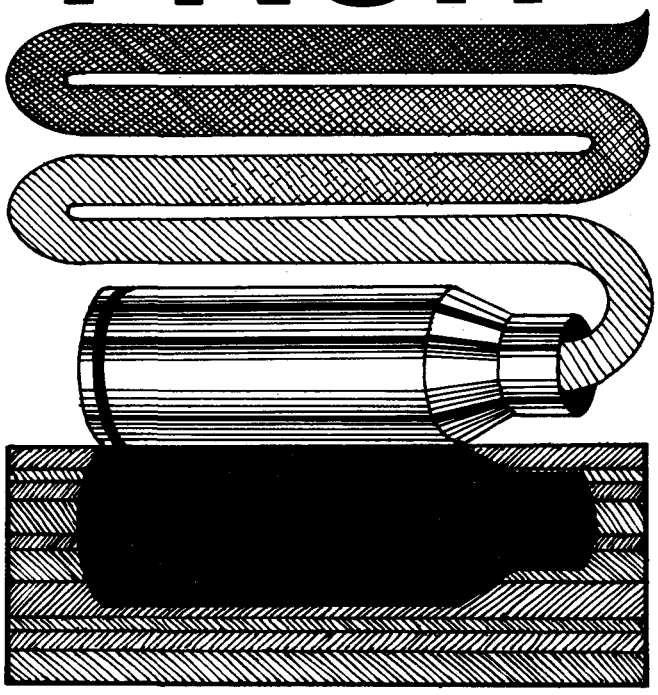
FRUIT



BY MARK E. CLEMENS

That night she dreamed she was in the parking lot down by the river. She had just locked the door and started away from the car when she felt the air jump beside her ear and then heard the report of a rifle shot. It was only a dream, but as she put her hand to her ear a white cloud of pigeons erupted from the roof of a nearby hotel.

The next day she drove to the parking lot, to the spot where she had parked in her dream. The space was open and she pulled in. The river, swollen with spring run-off, drowned out the noise of the traffic streaming across the bridge above the lot. A breeze ruffled the grass between the vacant benches along the river bank. She turned in her seat to look at the hotel rising overhead and there were three pigeons perched on top of the dirty gray limestone facade, but no one in sight around the hotel or on the bridge or the stairway down to the lot or among the scattered parked cars or on the grassy bank. Far across the river she saw a man, his raincoated figure dwarfed by the bulk of the old railroad depot, but he was only standing there with his hands in his pockets, no high-powered rifle to be seen.

When she opened the door to get out, there was a spent shell casing lying on the pavement where she would have put her foot. She leaned down and picked the casing up. It was warm and she turned it over and over in her hands, feeling as if she might have just created something, that perhaps her dreams were finally bearing fruit. □

MARK E. CLEMENS is finishing work on the MFA at the University of Montana. An earlier story of his appeared in Colorado-North Review.

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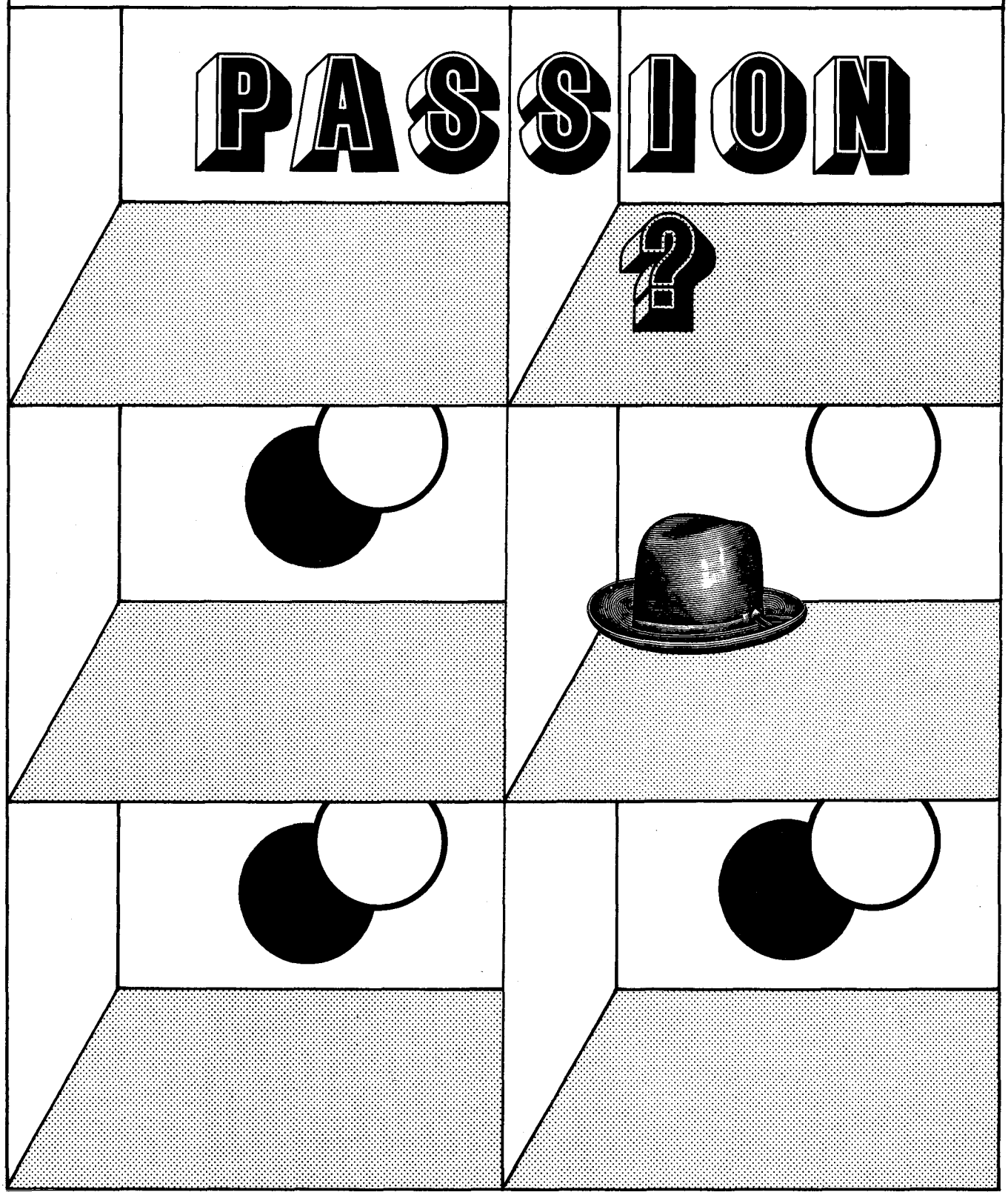
JONATHAN BAUMBACH



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"Everything remains to be done."

— *Jean Luc Godard*

1.

A man I know, a long time sometime friend, recently left his wife and three children because he had fallen in love with another woman. Such news has a disquieting effect on our crowd. Henry is the most domesticated and repressed husband among us, the most devoted of fathers. If Henry, our moral light, is capable of such anarchic behavior, it strikes us that almost anything is possible. Surmise, however, is not the business of this report. What I mean to do here is to separate the knowable evidence from unwarranted conjecture. I mean to investigate the mystery of Henry's inexplicable act as though I were a detective tracking down a criminal.

2.

Henry was barely twenty-four when he married Illana. They had met at college, had started going together when Henry, who was a year or so older, was in his sophomore year, though they had known each other casually (or such is the story one pieces together) from childhood. There were times, says Illana, when each was the other's only real friend. Her remark is not surprising. Henry and Illana had always seemed, to those of us who thought we knew them well, exceptionally close. They had grown over the years of their marriage to seem like mirror images of one another. One breathed in, we supposed, and the other breathed out. They saw themselves, and we tended to confirm that view, as a perfect couple.

3.

The year before he married Illana, Henry, then a Rhodes scholar, started work on a novel about a young intellectual affianced to his childhood sweetheart who falls in love during a summer abroad with a French woman twelve years his senior. He wrote 126 pages of this book before giving up and the manuscript apparently still exists in its first and only draft. It was, insofar as anyone knows, Henry's only attempt at prolonged fiction.

4.

In the second year of their marriage, their first daughter, Natalia, was born. Henry and Illana were extremely serious about the responsibility. Shortly after that, Henry, an up and coming editor, moved to a job in another publishing house that paid twenty dollars more a month. Illana also was working and they had a live-in maid to look after the child. Henry announced, we all remember, that Illana's working was a temporary arrangement, that it was the preference of both of them that she stay home with the child. Illana said that she and Henry on that matter were in thorough agreement. She made this assertion, as I remember, with surprising passion.

5.

Henry was under a great deal of pressure at work and went into therapy to avoid, as he said, breaking down altogether. He had a dream—his therapist had been after him to write down his dreams—in which his father, whom he hadn't seen in ten years, came to him and said that there was evidence that someone was shooting at him and he wondered if it were Henry. Henry said that he admitted to being angry at his father for having walked out on his mother but that he had no recollection of trying to kill him. The father said if thoughts could kill, Henry would have to be number one suspect. Thoughts don't kill, said Henry. Well, how do you explain the bullet in my stomach? said the father.

6.

About that time Henry reported to friends that he and Illana were reading to each other in bed at night. "We are going through the entire canon of Dickens," said Illana, "one chapter a night." "How long will it take to do all the novels?" someone asked. Henry, figuring to himself, a private smile on his face, said nothing. "We'll do it until we decide not to do it," said Illana.

7.

Illana had written a children's book in her spare time. Henry agented it for her, showing it to children's book editors at two other publishing houses, avoiding his own as a matter of moral discretion. Illana and Henry had always taken impeccable moral positions. And though they didn't presume to judge others, one sensed a certain discomfort with the unscrupulous or overweeningly ambitious. Illana withdrew the book at some point, indicating that she had no great desire to make her work public.

8.

I spoke to Henry at the hospital after the birth of his second daughter, Nara. He said, although he and Illana had wanted a boy, they were not in any way disappointed. Illana said the same thing to my wife in almost the same language, impressing on us (was it meant to?) how together they were, how intimately allied. A week later, when we visited them at home, Henry in Illana's presence made the same speech. When we got home my wife said,

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"Perhaps they protest too much," and I said, no, I thought they meant it. "It's the same thing," she said.

9.

We all admired the seeming ease with which Henry rose in his chosen profession. What was most impressive was that his ambition, which evidence suggests was considerable, was never aggressively displayed. He had never, not to our knowledge at least, advanced his career at the expense of someone else. We had almost never heard a bad word of him. Yet at the same time we felt that Henry's full capacities were not being realized. What we meant by that was not at all clear.

10.

What do we know about Illana? When friends of Henry's and Illana's get together, the question tends to come up. What has she had to say for herself in all the years we've known her? We thought of her as taciturn, though not unfriendly, a bit formal in manner, a woman who spoke her opinions as if they were national secrets. She had a way of looking after her children—this was when Henry was there to help—without making it seem, as do some mothers, that the job was overburdening her. We can enumerate her qualities with no strong sense of knowing the person who is the sum and substance of them.

11.

This is Henry's story mostly. It is Henry who announces one day, Illana sitting at the kitchen table with the baby on her lap, that he has fallen in love with someone else. "You have?" Illana is imagined to have asked. "What does that mean in terms of our marriage?"

"I don't know," said Henry. "It's too new to me."

"You don't know?" The question asked with some manner of skepticism. "What do you want to do?"

"What do you want me to do?"

"Well, naturally," Illana said softly, "I'd like you to break it off if you can."

"Out of the question," said Henry.

"I didn't realize that it . . ." said Illana, a small crack of panic in her usually impassive face, swallowing her words as though ashamed of their inadequacy.

"It happened," said Henry. "I didn't mean it to, but it did. I'm terribly sorry."

12.

After that first confession, Illana becomes a tacit partner, an accessory after the fact, in Henry's double life. Henry works out a regimen, accommodating both worlds. He has dinner with Illana and the children, helps put the children to bed, leaves afterwards to spend the night with Patricia, returning by taxi at 5 AM to be present when the children awake. It is important to him to have the children perceive their world as intact. (Also important perhaps to keep up appearances in front of himself and Illana, a way of deflecting awareness.) "I want you to do what's best for you," Illana is reported to have said to Henry. "I don't want to leave you and the children," said Henry, "and I can't give up Patricia." If this assertion wounds Illana, there is no visible evidence for it. After breakfast, Henry takes the oldest daughter, Natalia, to school, as he has always done before going off himself to work.

13

The Vice-President of the government foundation at which Henry now worked had been having an affair with the wife of one of the Board of Directors and word of it—one wondered why the news had taken so long—finally reached that lady's husband. Scandal ensued and the notorious administrator had no choice but to resign in favor of a slightly higher paying job at another foundation, leaving in his wake a vacancy at the top. It was rumored that Henry was in favored consideration for the post. Who knows where such rumors start? Henry, at the time, was the youngest and ablest associate director at the foundation, and it was more than possible that his well-wishers, wanting the rumor so, presumed its likelihood. Henry, taking nothing for granted, went to see the president of the foundation to indicate his interest and availability. Whatever Henry's boss said to him—the account given to me was notably short on specifics—Henry appeared hopeful in his guarded way. "Frankly," he said, "I have no reason to expect anything."

14.

Illana said, out of Henry's hearing, that she thought Henry was setting himself up for a fall. "You think he won't get the job?" asked her confidante, who in this case was my wife Genevieve. "I think his chances are not as good as he thinks they are," said Illana, according to my source. "Of course he deserves the job," she added. "I just don't think he's in line for it." Something odd was going on between them, we thought. Why hadn't Illana, who was the epitome of loyalty, offered this perception to Henry?

15.

One day my wife asked me if I found Illana sexy? Sexy may not be the word she had used. "Attractive" or "beautiful" is more likely. I don't remember what I answered. "Uhnrr," perhaps. Something that cancelled itself out, I suspect. What's that about? I thought, though let it slide by at the time. About a week later, something else bothering me, I asked her why she had asked about Illana. "Oh," she said, "someone else was saying, I don't remember who, that Illana was the most beautiful woman of his acquaintance and I wondered if you thought the same thing." I said I didn't even think Henry thought that. "That's an odd thing to say," she said. "Well, she's beautiful in a conventional way," I said, "but there's something glacial about her as if she weren't quite alive."

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16.

Why do I remember my wife's question about Illana and my answer, and what do they have to do with the larger question under investigation in this study? I think we both felt that there was something invisibly wrong with Henry and Illana's perfect marriage, though we were not in touch with that perception. And why should we have been? Why should we have thought of Henry and Illana at all? I don't know the answers. I ask the questions merely to ask them. Illana was not the issue of my wife's question as it turned out, merely the displaced occasion. I had heard the question she had asked, but not the unspoken confession it contained.

17.

Two days after Henry's son was born, he got word that the job he had coveted, had come in fact to count on, had been given to someone else. The news arrived, as it tends to in government agencies, by way of rumor, and Henry, as angry as he ever remembers himself, went to see his boss to check it out. "Don," Henry said, "I've heard some disturbing news." Don took his glasses off to listen, lit a cigarette, though he had given up smoking a week ago this day. "Well, what have you heard?" he asked. (His tone suggested, Henry reported, that there wasn't any rumor around he wasn't prepared to deny.) "I had heard," said Henry, "that you had made a decision on Calvin's replacement." "Oh that," said Don. "You said you would let me know as soon as you came to a decision," said Henry. "Did I say that?" said Don. "Frankly, I don't remember making any such promise. The feeling was, and as you know I queried opinions from all directions, that you could have done the job adequately—no one had anything negative to say about your capabilities—but that . . ." Henry had no recollection of how the sentence was completed.

18.

Henry, it was reported, took his disappointment with extraordinary grace, which was our idea of Henry. "That's the way it goes," he said, defending the qualifications of the man chosen in his place. "What I have to do is reëvaluate my commitment to my job." Illana seemed emotionally drained. We perceived it as a form of loyalty to Henry and admired them both—this special couple—all the more.

19.

The following account has been confirmed by two sources and so it is included here despite my own tendency to disbelieve it. The time was about four weeks after Henry learned that he had been passed over for the promotion he had anticipated. The affair with Patricia, if it had already started, was some two months shy of becoming public news. Henry and Illana were at a party hosted by Henry's employer. It was a cocktail party held in some east side apartment to honor the grant recipients of that year and the living room was crowded to the walls with the mostly uninvited. Some bearded middle-aged composer, congenitally sour, took it into his head to assail Henry over the granting policy of the foundation which had just passed Henry over for promotion. Henry was polite at first, said he was not responsible for the choices of committees on which he hadn't served, then proceeded, which is typical of Henry, to defend the foundation's policies unequivocally. The composer kept after him, finding fault with one choice after another. When he could take no more—one can imagine the complication of his feelings—Henry turned his back on him. Illana, who happened to be on the periphery of the small group listening in, was heard to whisper to Henry, "Why didn't you answer him?" Henry, usually under control, lost his temper and shouted at her, "Why didn't I answer him? Why didn't I? I didn't answer him because the son of a bitch is not listening to anything I say." It is reported that Illana's face reddened and that she apologized to Henry's adversary for her husband's behavior.

20.

Even after Henry moves in with Patricia, Illana continues to pretend to the children that she and Henry are together as before. "Why are you doing it?" my wife says to her when she comes to visit with the three children, who range in age from six months to six years. "If I were you, I'd tell him to fuck off." Illana, who rarely smiles, smiles at that. "I would if I felt that way," she says. "I'm not angry at Henry. I want him to be happy and if he's happy this way, then that's the way it has to be." When Illana is gone my wife says to me: "One of these days she's going to realize how angry she really is. And then. . . ."

21.

A call from Henry this morning at work. He wants us, he says, to be the first of his friends to meet Patricia. An appointment is made for dinner at a Chinese restaurant called Human Feast. My wife says, when she hears of the arrangement, that she won't go, that it is a disloyalty to Illana even to meet Patricia. I mention that Henry is also a friend and that there is no reason why we have to take sides. "I can't forgive him," she says, "He may be a friend of yours, but he's no friend of mine."

Patricia seems as nervous to meet us as we are to meet her, and the experience reminds me of the blind dates of my adolescence. None of us seems able to strike the right note. "What do you think?" Henry whispers out of earshot of the women. "I think she's . . . (I search for the word) fine," I say generously. My answer seems to disappoint him. "Is that all?" he asks.

22.

"What do you think of her?" my wife asks when we're in bed that night, the first either of us has risked the subject.

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"She's different from what I imagined," I hear myself saying.

"I don't know what you mean by that." A note of irritation in her tone.

"Does that mean you don't like her?" I ask.

"It's not a question of liking or disliking her. She's nothing. She's a blank. Didn't you see that?"

My silence offers denial.

"My God, Joshua, I've never seen anyone with less personality. She's pathetic."

"Well, what do you think she has for Henry?"

"I haven't the faintest idea. What do you think?"

"Well, she's not unattractive," I say.

"Not unattractive? She's the most ordinary looking woman I've ever seen in my life."

23.

Henry is on one of his periodic diets; we go to a health food restaurant for lunch and have a couple of shredded carrot sandwiches. Our conversation is correspondingly low on calories. "Patsy liked you and Genevieve," he says a few times, rephrasing the remark so as not to seem to repeat himself. "She felt the two of you accepted her." "She seemed extremely nice," I say. "Very . . ." The word eludes me. "Unconstrained," he says. "Unconstrained," I repeat. "In that way, she's the opposite of Illana," he says. "Do you think you'll stay with her?" I ask. He becomes thoughtful, which is a form of reprimand with Henry, an indication that you've overstepped yourself. Then he says with a forgiving smile: "We take every day as it comes." It goes like that until later in the meal when Henry says, "Illana and I still love each other. The situation hasn't changed that."

"Then you are thinking of going back to her?"

"It's impossible," he says, smiling enigmatically. "We're both happier this way."

"Both of you?" My incredulousness seems to escape notice.

Henry eats his yogurt and nuts with a beatific smile.

"Is it sex?" I ask, expecting no answer.

"Never been so good," he says.

24.

"It's not sex," says my wife. We are still trying to understand our friend Henry. "Or sex is merely an excuse for something else."

"If Henry says their sex is good, why should you doubt him?"

"Henry," says Genevieve, "is trying something out. He wants to see how far he can go, how outrageous he can be, before Illana will say 'no more.' "

"That leaves out the implication of Patsy altogether," I say.

"Patsy doesn't count. Don't you see that?"

"If you ask Henry, Patsy is the only one who counts."

Our conflicting views of the reality abrade against one another, strain the limits of our friendship.

"Why are we fighting over Henry and Illana?" my wife asks.

The continuing argument becomes its own answer.

25.

Henry and Patricia have been living together for six months. Henry visits with the children on weekends and sometimes comes over in the evenings to put them to bed. Illana, although she sees other men, appears to work at it as if a recommended though pointless exercise, remains in her heart faithful to the Arrangement. How do I know this? Illana tells us or tells Genevieve, which comes to the same thing. Genevieve becomes increasingly impatient with Illana's stance, though talks to her almost every day on the phone, gauging her emotional temperature from the evidence of the unspoken. "She has no idea how angry she really is," says Genevieve. "Her calm is a form of self-oblivion. Meanwhile she won't allow herself to get interested in any of the men she sees. I can't stand it."

26.

My wife says, à propos of my arm around her, "You're behaving like Henry."

"What does that mean?"

"Henry and Patsy, as you know, behave like teenagers in public, but they have an excuse. They're new to each other."

Her rebuke turns into a fight. I recall my arm and take refuge in another room.

She follows after a moment. "Don't you see what you're doing?" she asks. "You're jealous that Henry has another woman."

"Maybe I am," I say.

27.

I overhear Genevieve complain to Illana on the phone about me, her way I think of criticizing Henry indirectly. All of our men are unreliable, says her tone. And what have I done? Whatever it is, she refuses to forgive me. "I am not Henry," I say to her.

"You wish you were," she says.

I call Henry from work, but he is not available for lunch that day, which is too bad. He is precisely the person I need to talk to in my present mood. An odd coincidence: I run into Illana at lunch; she is with another man, I am with another woman. We hail each other across the restaurant. At first I didn't recognize her—how absolutely smashing she looks!—was staring at her in admiration. "We'll have to talk some time," I say to her. She says, "Yes, yes."

28.

Have I drifted from the subject of this investigation? The subject itself drifts. To tell someone's story is to identify, to some extent, with the inner life of that person. In explaining Henry, I explain myself; in explaining myself,

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I explain Henry. Although not influenced by Henry's behavior—I am convinced that he is not my example—I have just split with my wife of ten years. My situation differs from Henry's in certain definitive ways. I haven't (at the time, at *this* time) fallen in love with anyone else. Genevieve and I weren't getting along, were fighting too much, were making each other unhappy. I realize this sounds evasive, but the disrepair of our marriage is too immediate for me to see it with any clarifying distance. It is easier, if not altogether more edifying, to talk about Henry and Illana. Henry continues to live joyfully, passionately, with Patsy, who is neither more nor less beautiful than his wife and who, despite apparent differences, resembles her more than not. Illana continues to make do and to accept her husband's manifest disaffection with public and private grace. I envy them both. My situation is neither pleasurable in itself nor might it engender the admiration of others.

29.

Tonight I have dinner with Illana and the two older children, sitting at the table with them in their makeshift living/dining room as I had times before in significantly different circumstances. Illana prefers, she says (the evening's arrangement is her idea), to eat with the children like a family. After dinner, I help her put them to bed, a chore of some complication. "How do you manage by yourself?" I ask. "Henry usually comes to help," she says. "But since you were coming I told him there was no need for him to bother." I indicate some surprise that she had mentioned it to Henry. "We have no secrets from each other," she says with that seriousness characteristic of them both.

"What now?" she asks.

The question is not meant to be answered. We sit on the sofa, holding hands, talking about nothing. At one point, she says—we have just kissed somewhat awkwardly—"Joshua, do you think of me as a cold person?" I reserve answer, kissing her again as if that urgent gesture (is it really as urgent as it seems?) were a response to her question. And yet what I think one moment ceases to be true the next. She is passionate yet remote as if her passion were a private wellspring separate from her day to day nature.

30.

I return to my hotel room at four in the morning and have barely dropped off when the phone rings. "I want you back," the voice says. It is odd that I am unable to identify or rather confuse the identity of that voice. I finesse my confusion. "At this moment?" I ask. "As soon as you can," says the voice. (I will know in a minute who it is, I think. Keep her talking and she will reveal herself.) "Why do you want me back?" "Oh, God! Do you have to ask? If you don't come to me, I'll come to you." She hangs up abruptly though soundlessly, fitting the phone like a piece of a puzzle into the base. Three hours later (all time is an estimate here), a knock on the door wakes me from an erotic dream. "Who's there?" I ask the nurse in my dream. The knock repeats, replays itself. I put on a bathrobe and stagger to the door, bumping invisible furniture en route. "Do you mind my coming to your room?" she asks, stepping in, locking the door behind her. Perhaps she says nothing at all and the voice I quote is out of that interrupted dream. There is no time for questions and explanations; there is barely even time to kiss. Coupling is impersonal and urgent like some natural disaster. "Who's with the children?" I ask later. "Never mind," she says. "The children are well looked after."

31.

Henry seems unusually jaunty when we meet after work at O'Neill's for a drink. I am not eager to talk to him, would have avoided this meeting if I hadn't felt obliged to face him. It takes him two drinks to get to what's on his mind. "I don't know that I like what's going on between you and Illana," he says casually and then again with added weight as if he hadn't heard himself the first time. "I've always liked Illana," I say. He nods. "She's a terrific person, and I don't want to see her hurt." Although expecting something like this—Henry is one of the most consciously moral people I know—I can think of nothing useful to say. "Are you in love with her?" he asks. "Henry, come on," I say. His face clenches and for a moment, just for a moment, he is so infuriated he can barely keep himself together. "I feel very close to Illana," he says softly. "I appreciate that," I say. His glass overturns and the bartender comes over to mop the counter. "It's all right," he says. "I'm not angry with you." The conversation seems to repeat itself. "I don't understand what you're asking," I hear myself say perhaps for the third time. "I don't want to see Illana hurt, that's all," Henry says once again.

"Are you asking me to stop seeing her?"

"I don't think I have the right to ask you that," he says.

32.

Illana seems to call at least once a day, which is all right, though sometimes I wish it were Genevieve, who never calls. One night at her place, she says, "I really want a husband, not a lover."

"You have both," I say.

"I have neither," she says. "Joshua, I'm opposed to disorder."

"I'm not sure it's over with Genevieve," I say.

Illana laughs. "She says it's over. We talk about you on the phone."

That night after the children are in bed and we have made love with our customary hunger, rushing through the act as if it might be taken from us if we waited, I have an odd perception. "You would take Henry back, wouldn't you, if he was ready to come back?"

She thinks about it and thinks about it. "I would," she says finally, "but afterward I'd be sorry." □

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BERGER HEINEGG

aesthetics/piety/wisdom/grace/aesthetics/piety/wisdom/grace/aesthetics/piety/wisdom/grace/aesthetics/piety/wisdom/g

1. Science, Environmentalism, and Music

It has never been adequately explained why environmentalists and research scientists tend to an interest in music, particularly classical music, wildly surpassing probability. Physicists at universities and laboratories across the country regularly meet to read through scores and give chamber recitals. *Not Man Apart,* the publication of Friends of the Earth, has noted with awe the number of environmentalists who are part-time musicians. Many immersed in abstract theory relax by playing with the local symphony, or by listening to extensive record collections, and almost emblematic is the figure of Einstein, who insisted on playing, however badly, the violin. A certain correlation would be anticipated because of educational levels and the cultural matrix, but why music in particular, in such percentages, with such fanaticism?

Music seems to inhabit the mercurial dark at the human center, and the ability of patterned sound to become charged with our feeling is an enigma that still ends, like music itself, in silence. For kinds of music which appeal to the brain as well as the bone to be pleasurable to certain kinds of people is less mysterious. Some hidden bond must link the scientist and the environmentalist with the musician—a bond which I believe to be their common rage for systems.

Consider the infant just learning to walk. His humanity is already absorbed in the process of distinguishing self from nonself, and sorting the nonself into dog, chair, Mama, food, caca. At the same time he is abstracting those externals into some interior system of words. If Noam Chomsky is right, words themselves, regardless of culture, await a built-in syntax, some master language within which all languages fall. Just as the seed is coded with the plant, the human brain is ripe with the patterns which will bloom into the human complexity. We are from birth spinners of systems.

Systemizing proceeds through stages. Between first grammar and adolescence comes the acquisitive stage, one which many of us never leave. It is the dread age of collecting: rocks, coins, stamps, model planes, baseball cards. As adults we may substitute antiques, African violets or pornography, but the unstated goal is still the same: when the collection is complete one has *all* of one's chosen category. Life in its extravagance is too vast for possession, but the collector can isolate some element small enough for purchase. Any collection expanding toward its goal of completeness gives the satisfaction of an acquired language, a new system.

With adolescence and adulthood come new levels of abstraction. Now it is perhaps a passion for maps, for visiting all the National Parks or Wilderness Areas, for reading all of one author, for photographing the highlights of one's travels or one's life, for amassing friends, money, votes, sexual conquests. Systems become less an array of objects than a rainbow of memories and achievements intended to give pleasure across the spectrum. That it does not is irrelevant; the joy is to proceed.

At the highest system-gathering short of mystical fusion, the mind seeks to understand the relation of each component to its fellows so as to grasp how a system adapts, evolves and survives as a breathing creature. At this point one turns into an economist, an astronomer, a biologist, a physicist, a student of politics, anthropology, ecosystems, medicine or the law. With sufficient brass one becomes an expert. In mankind's eyes, and particularly one's own, one has reached an enviable plateau; one has captured a system alive.

To fuse our amateur musicians, the abstract scientist and the environmentalist, consider what the brain faces trying to absorb a single ecosystem. It begins over like a child, isolating and naming the parts: microbes, insects, plants, mammals, the air-borne and the aquatic, all animal and vegetable organisms and everything in between. Next the burden of assembly: how does it relate to its context in the mineral world? What are the food chains? How does it divide up territory? How does it adapt to changes in climate, sudden gaps in the food chain, blooms and eclipses of species, the rise of one form and decline of another? What, indeed, *are* the variables? Most fiendish-

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AN ECOLOGY QUARTET

ly, how does it perceive itself? One must consider that many organisms are blind, react only to variations in temperature, see only in two dimensions or in shades of grey, possess hearing or scent or sight keener than our own, or have senses like sonar which we lack entirely. No creature may be aware that other creatures perceive the world differently from itself, or that they perceive it at all, yet their exclusive realities meld into a fabric with its own dynamics of organization, change and endurance—a super organism which sustains itself perhaps blindly, but correctly. Aldo Leopold enjoined his fellow forest rangers, before they meddled with their territories, to "think like a mountain." Good but impossible advice: with perception splintered into as many modes as there are species, only God, if he so chose, could think like a mountain. It seems clear that anyone who tackles one of the abstract sciences feels impelled to take systemizing to the limit. The task is necessarily hopeless, for the physicist as well as the ecologist. The variables themselves are too numerous to be identified. Our knowledge of them comes through five senses as arbitrary and isolated as those of any other creature, or from the sense-extending machines which have blossomed since the Renaissance. For the student of ecology the task involves sensibilities which are alien and inaccessible, and for the physicist a range from the infinitesimal to the cosmic which baffles the human scale. There is the further limitation of our imagination, well expressed by the physicist who said that "the universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose." The apprehension of any transhuman system is a mirage that flees geometrically as one approaches.

Complete knowledge of a system, then, can only be possible under one condition—that it be wholly human in origin. Yet many such systems exist. Spun by the human imagination out of the shapes, colors, sounds, solids and spaces of this world, out of the languages of word, number and tone, and out of our sense of proportion, they are the arts. Unless experimentally computed for randomness, art depends upon choice, deliberate or unconscious, of the human brain upon materials to hand. Each category of art, within the limitations of its medium and its rules to be followed or broken, is its own system, accessible because it is secreted out of ourselves.

And of all the arts, music is the most transparent to pure form. Upon our emotions it is the most direct. At times it almost demands that we move in time, be carried along, ride its melodic crests and step to its rhythms. It will not let go of our memories. Yet even as music insists through our blood it permits us to wield our intelligence upon its relation of parts, its symmetries and oppositions, its unfolding balance. To thread the labyrinth any composer sets off produces a mental exhilaration which runs parallel to, but is distinct from, the raw sweep of emotion.

The composer is the quintessential creator of systems. It is his province to produce the most perfect, or the grandest, or the most exquisitely chiseled construct of which he is capable, whether song, sonata or symphony. He may not rationally understand how a certain passage came to be, just as artists in all fields have attested to the sensation of creation simply coming *through* them, but the greater the composer, the more mysterious the ease with which he will satisfy and still surprise—and the greater the challenge to the listener. "Music is feeling, then, not sound," says Wallace Stevens; "you are the music while the music lasts," says T.S. Eliot. Music allows you to *be* a system even as you trace its whorls and reversals.

Like the child, like the ecologist, the listener begins in ignorance, a strand at a time: the notes of a phrase, the phrases of a melody, the overlapping of melodies, the harmonies that engender further elaborations—music's atoms and galaxies, its spiraling energy, its explosions, its mass and empty space, its organizing gravity. The viola in a quartet, a horn passage in a symphony, a recurrent or fleeting motif, a strand of polyphony among many—in the community of systems these are the dolphins which leap through the current, the keening of the hawk, the nibblers among roots and the great winged migrations.

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Struggling for dominance, harmonizing in symbiosis, working its destiny in baroque stasis, in romantic evolution or in contemporary leaps and gaps—each factor unraveling as if unaware of its place in the composite—music is the career of a complete organism, its adaptations, its disappearances, its summits and its final silence. Yet music is also the product of a single human brain, and offers the listener a single statement. Perhaps what is so satisfying to the physicist, the astronomer, the outdoor enthusiast, the seeker of wholes—and the final seduction of music—is this: music is not a system of objects, but a paradigm of systems. It satisfies the cerebral hunger even as it engages our deepest feelings.

Music as a metaphor for existence, of course, is no novelty. Pythagoras took it quite literally, and when he found that the division of vibrating strings by whole numbers created the sounds most harmonious to the ear, believed he had decoded creation's own harmony. The Ptolemaic system sang those harmonies with crystal spheres. Myths in which Orpheus creates harmony out of chaos parallel the division of light from darkness, the firmament from the waters, in a kind of musical Genesis.

The musical universe did not die with Copernicus. In this century Rilke has based his personal mysticism on Orphic myths and Eliot has shaped his in musical form with the *Four Quartets*. The composer Scriabin believed he discovered a mystic symmetry in the bisected octave—the augmented fourth or flatted fifth—and his converts have attested to experiencing through his music a blinding white light and other transcendent phenomena. Claude Levi-Strauss, whose *Le Cru et le Cuit* is based like the Eliot poems on musical forms, has said that to think mythologically is to think musically. There are recent books expounding *The Symphony of Life,* and the possibilities of metaphoric degeneration are as available as bad music itself. But most significantly for us there is contemporary physics with its great cosmic and subatomic patterns, its evolving symmetries of quarks and neutrinos, the double helix of molecular biology, all the spiraling configurations of matter which is, as it turns out, interchangeable with energy. The universe, says Sir James Jeans, begins to resemble a gigantic thought—and, one might almost add, a musical thought.

But it is a thought most of us will never think. Hiking the ecosystem with cameras and guide books, listening to records, shuffling through chaos with our five thin senses, most of us feel clever just to find the trail. We look up and promptly forget the names of our fellow coordinates until the next time they bloom or sting us or fly past. We listen to Brahms relishing but not quite grasping how a passage, satisfactory in passing, answers to the whole. But once in awhile our binoculars catch an oriole braiding its nest out of a fan palm, or hear in the second theme a slow inversion of the first. Those insights tell us little more than the data they connect, but they offer just the exhilaration, the sense of penetration, which is joy in the mind.

To reproduce the universe inside, in imitation of our gods, is our upward mobility. Human intelligence, divine theft that it is, is still isolated and frail, its patterns only tentative. But those systems are vital to consciousness as we know it, and as the only species so obsessed, we are the music while the music lasts. — *Bruce Berger*

2. Lessons from the Indians: Ecological Piety

Oh our Mother the Earth, Oh our Father the sky,
Your children are we, and with tired backs
We bring you the gifts that you love.
Then weave for us a garment of brightness.

May the warp be the white light of morning,
May the weft be the red light of evening,
May the fringes be the falling rain,
May the border be the standing rainbow.

Thus weave for us a garment of brightness
That we may walk fittingly where birds sing,
That we may walk fittingly where grass is green,
Oh our Mother the Earth, oh our Father the sky.

—Tewa chant

Visiting the Indian ruins of the Southwest—sites like Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon, El Morro National Monument—one cannot help comparing their stark beauty with the soulless asphalt desolation of Phoenix, Tucson, and other boom towns of the Sunbelt. Anasazi "apartment houses" in Mesa Verde or Betatakin blend gracefully into surrounding canyon walls, suggesting humble but artful cooperation with nature, while the irrelevant ugliness of freeway civilization (motels, boutiques, fast food joints, automobile show rooms, and an occasional fake-adobe bank thrown in for local color) spills aimlessly out into the desert. Even inhabited pueblos, such as Taos, despite the presence of pick-up trucks and other incongruous contributions from the white world, preserve a sense of harmony with nature missing from that world.

Of course, Southwestern cities, for all their prefabricated sterility, are no more de-natured than the places most Americans live in. And the same goes for their frenetic, wasteful, life style. But what can be done about this? If the vast historical process which led from the primitive cliff dwellings in Walnut Canyon, Arizona, to the bustling modernity of nearby Flagstaff has in some ways brought us to an impasse, is there any going back? Owing to their poverty and primitive technology, if to

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nothing else, Indians managed to avoid many of the problems that bedevil our culture. But can they teach us anything now?

To be sure, many Americans with conservationist sympathies vaguely view the Indian as a sort of ecological saint. A frequently shown TV spot has a (presumably) Sioux brave with his pony looking down on a busy highway from atop a ridge strewn with litter. The camera zooms in on his melancholy face just as a tear trickles down his cheek. "People start pollution," announces the voice of William Conrad, "people can stop it." But, as a matter of fact, Indians are as prone to littering as any of us, as a ride through the nearest reservation will demonstrate. And, in any case, littering is the least of our environmental troubles. (By and large, it's the people living in immaculate houses with manicured lawns—and swimming pools, snowmobiles, motorboats—who damage nature most.)

Sentimental idealization aside, Indians of the Southwest, and elsewhere, will not fit comfortably into the role of enlightened heroes of ecology. For one thing, they have all been caught up, to one degree or another, in the meshes of the same capitalist-industrialist network that binds the rest of us. Indian towns, like Browning, Montana, or Gallup, New Mexico, look like white towns, only worse: poor, squalid, decrepit. For another thing, the combination of a high birth rate and the (at best) marginal fertility of reservation land have caused Indians to overgraze and erode millions of acres. Despite the splendid settings that some of them enjoy, reservations resemble neither national parks nor model farms. Nor can we, leaving behind the wretched state of contemporary Indians, return to any golden age in the days before white settlers came to dispossess their ancestors. Speaking of the pre-Columbian inhabitants of the Four Corners area, J. Richard Ambler writes, "They denuded large areas of their forest cover, littered the ground in front of their houses with trash, caused tons of topsoil to be eroded away and depleted of nutrients, and filled their lungs with soot from the fires." Just like us, apparently.

But none of this, important as it is to keep in mind, cancels the essential truth that the traditional Indian relationship with nature is profoundly religious, while ours is not. And the ecological piety of Indian cultures, though it does not automatically prevent the ravaging of nature any more than ordinary sectarian piety automatically prevents sin, may well be the *sine qua non* condition for a livable future, if not for survival pure and simple. For, at the rate things are going, only a spiritual revolution (which fortunately seems to be already under way) can thwart the forces now devastating the land—the stripminers, clear-cutters, developers, agribusinessmen, and so on.

What are the roots of this ecological piety, and how does it express itself? We can turn for an answer to the Pueblo Indians, of all the tribes in the United States the ones least disturbed by white incursions and in closest contact with their ancient past. The salient feature of their lives is an all-pervading intimacy with the earth. Indeed, the Hopi, Zuñi, and others believe that they originally emerged from beneath the earth, and every *kiva* (underground ceremonial chamber) has a *sipapu*, or entrance hole, in the floor, to commemorate this event. Actually, this mythical genesis went through four stages, each of which has its equivalent in the *kiva*. As Frank Waters says, "In the floor is a small hole . . . leading down into the first underworld. The floor level is the second world into which man emerged. The raised seating ledge represents the third world. And the ladder rises up to the roof opening, the fourth world to which man has climbed." The microcosmic symbolism of the *kiva* orients its inhabitants to the whole of nature, and reminds them to harmonize their lives with it.

The fourth world (in Hopi *Túwaqachi*, world complete) is by no means as pleasant as the previous three, and Pueblo Indians, in fact, live in a harsh and demanding environment, with little rainfall, hot summers and cold winters. Man is everywhere dependent on nature, but nowhere can he take nature's gifts less for granted than in the desert. Faced with this constricting pressure, Indians have had recourse both to rational ingenuity (e.g., Hopi techniques of dry farming) and religious ritual—a complex liturgical structure that gives, or used to give, direction and rhythm to their lives. Pueblo men, according to Professor Gordon Baldwin, spend at least half their time in religious ceremonies.

These ceremonies, which bear on the needs of the community rather than the individual, deal especially with all phases of the growing season, with the fertility of fields, animals, and men. They are not so much worship as a series of transactions, at once mystical and practical, with the powers of nature. The famous Hopi Snake Dance, for example, is designed to bring rain. After eight days of prayer, Snake priests dance through the village plaza with rattlesnakes, red racers, sidewinders, or other snakes (the Hopi, like many other peoples, credit snakes with supernatural qualities) in their mouths. Then the snakes are carried by Antelope priests to a charmed circle, sprinkled with cornmeal, and released to each of the cardinal points, messengers from the Hopi to the chthonic spirits. Soon thereafter it rains, more or less inevitably. Like the Christian sacraments, these rites effect what they symbolize.

In a way this kind of religion seems to be a distinctly unspiritual, *quid pro quo* affair. The dancers and other participants want certain results, so they apply a certain ritual formula to get them. Like all believers in magic, one might say, they apply obsolete methods to pragmatic ends. Thus, the ceremonies of the Apaches and the Navaho, neighbors of the Pueblo Indians, are chiefly devoted to curing the sick. If the outside observer, like most secular-minded people, expects religion to be "disinterested," he will probably find this kind of religion crude and self-seeking. (To the Indians, of course, such an objection would be meaningless. The whole point of ritual dances and prayers is that they are strong medicine, i.e., they work. Why bother with them otherwise?)

What interests us, however, is not the motivation behind Pueblo religious practice, but its underlying intuitions. Perhaps the most basic of these is a species of cosmic humility. Man, to the Pueblo Indians, is neither the center of the universe nor the crown of creation. In the words of R.F. Kirk: "In this system the starting point is man, who is the lowest because the most dependent and the least mysterious. In just so far as an organism resembles man is it related to him. Insofar as it is mysterious, is it believed removed from man, further advanced and more holy. Thus animals, being mortal, are more nearly related to man than are gods, but the animal is more closely associated with deity than man because the animal is mysterious, and has powers not possessed by man. . . . Elements and the phenomena of nature, because still

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more mysterious and powerful, are closer to the supreme beings than are either men or animals."

This runs counter to the Western conviction that "Numberless are the world's wonders, but none/ More wonderful than man," but is just as philosophically defensible. The further nature moves from human consciousness, the more intellectually impenetrable it becomes. Pascal's *libertin* had good reason to be terrified by the eternal silence of infinite space. All of nature, but especially the parts that are not or cannot be "domesticated," forms a vast and awesome Other over against our minds. We justify our claim to superiority by insisting on our ever increasing power to control and manipulate nature. And where that fails, we have at least the advantage of possessing nature cognitively: we know the world, and it doesn't know us.

But, of course, this knowledge is essentially superficial. We can fill up warehouses with zoological information, but we can never get "inside" an animal, never see the world through its eyes. And, however spectacular our short-term "victories" over nature (some of which, like pesticides and dams, now seem to be decidedly Pyrrhic), in the long run nature always triumphs. We can interfere with nature, but only in ways that she allows. Otherwise, we have to pay a very stiff penalty, as the PBB affair in Michigan and similar catastrophes have shown. Nature, in any case, still controls us in ways that no civilization, no amount of wealth and ingenuity, can altogether circumvent: through climate and physical surroundings, and the needs and weaknesses of the body. Lastly, all men die, and when the fires of the sun begin to cool, the human race will disappear entirely.

Recognizing all this necessarily leads to a certain devaluation of man, but it also opens the way to a richer and more fraternal relationship with nature. In the Taos deer dance, which is performed, roughly speaking, to insure successful hunting for the year, villagers impersonate deer, antelope, buffalo, cougars, coyotes, bobcats, and even wild turkey, disguising themselves beneath animal heads and skins. At the center of the dance are the two Deer Mothers, played by two imposing matrons of the pueblo in white buckskin robes. To them, as to the incarnation of nature's life-giving force, everyone does obeisance. It may appear strange for the Indians to honor an animal they hope to kill, but, as Erna Fergusson explains in *Dancing Gods*, "Long ago, according to the legend, men and animals lived together and understood each other. They spoke the same language, and the animals knew that they must be sacrificed that their human brothers might live. This dance is an appeal to that old understanding." Many North American Indian tribes, in fact, have the custom of apologizing to the spirits of animals they have slain.

In a society where the animals we consume are "processed" from feedlot to supermarket, the Indian attitude might be written off as impossibly naive, but St. Francis of Assisi, among others, would know better. Animism, literally or metaphorically understood, has this advantage over the commercial exploitation of nature, that it fosters healthier relations between man and the non-human world: we usually treat family members better than we treat strangers. Actually, the unity of nature is as much a biological commonplace as a mystic intuition, but the fragmentation and complexity of our lives has made us lose sight of it. Pueblo Indians, living (until recently) at the mercy of the elements, sharing their homeland with all sorts of animals, and drawing their sustenance directly from the earth, never imagined themselves superior to the rest of nature.

"The Hopi land," writes chief Andrew Hermequaftewa, "is the Hopi religion. The Hopi religion is bound up in the Hopi land." And the same could be said of all the Pueblo Indians. The land for them is not real estate nor the sum of natural resources, but sacred space, a numinous, haunted cosmos, or, to borrow Hamilton Tyler's arresting phrase a "gaming table for the gods." Such beliefs, of course, do not necessarily guarantee wise or beneficent land use. Indian sheep have devastated reservation pasturage, just as the white man's cattle have devastated government owned grazing lands in the West. Indians have had to learn about soil conservation, like everybody else. But ecological piety *does* insure against the cold-blooded abuse or destruction of land for profit. Indians may scatter empty beer bottles alongside reservation highways (as Latin Catholics will urinate against cathedral walls), but they don't defile their land by "Californication." Indians would never have defaced Mt. Rushmore (in the heart of *paha sapa*, the holy ground called the Black Hills) with the patriotic graffiti which throngs of tourists now stupidly admire.

One of the reasons, among many, why Americans have played such havoc with the land is that the bonds that attach them to it are so weak. Their proprietary instincts are stronger than their local roots. Discounting the hyperbole in Santayana's remark that no American lives where he was born, the fact remains that we move too fast and too often for our own or nature's good. We glorify the courageous enterprise of the homesteaders, but huge numbers of them quickly sold out to the railroads and pushed on. Sooners in one generation, Okies in another. And transients can't care for the land the way its natives can. Pueblo Indians, unlike most other Indians in this country, still live on their ancestral lands—or a truncated portion thereof. The rapport they have with their environment has grown out of immemorial contact with it. This has given their lives a pattern of stability, economy, and restraint—rare virtues in a hectic consumer society like ours.

More than one anthropologist studying the Pueblo Indians has painted them in glowing Utopian colors. But even if the Hopis, the Zuñis, and their neighbors *had* constructed some sort of ideal state, and even if traditional folkways were not continually disappearing, we still couldn't simply graft appropriate parts of their culture onto ours: it wouldn't take. Our culture is secular, so we have to defend the environment with reason and rhetoric instead of religion. Technology has gotten us into a catastrophic mess, and technology will have to get us out. (It's the old story of Achilles' spear: one end wounds, the other heals.) When it comes to political controversy, conservationists have to wield the usual worldly weapons, lobbying, law suits, organizational pressure. They have to appeal to the public's enlightened self-interest rather than its spiritual values because *our* prevailing faiths, Christianity and Judaism, have seldom paid much attention to nature.

What good, then, are any lessons we might learn from the Indians? Though ecological piety has yet to sway the general population or, still less, Exxon, General Motors, or the AFL-CIO, it might, indeed it must, become more

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potent in the future. Without piety—in the sense of the Latin *pietas*, reverence and loyalty—without religious passion to counter the violence, greed, and arrogant hyperactivity of our culture, the environmental movement is, in the long run, doomed. Without this piety the campaign against runaway development, which undoubtedly butchers the land, will fare no better than the campaign against cigarettes, which undoubtedly cause cancer.

Ecological piety, no more than any other bona fide religious sentiment, cannot be wished or prodded into existence just because we need it. It must spring up spontaneously in the mind, not as an abstract eternal verity, but as a wholehearted response to the majesty and vulnerability of nature—that is, of the specific bit of nature that surrounds us here and now. Ecological piety, whether ours or the Pueblo Indians' or anyone else's, flows from one primeval source: contact with the earth. The greatest danger to the environment is not human destructiveness, bad as that is, but deafness to the signals which nature emits. As in any marriage, breaking off communications poses a much worse threat than a fair-minded fight. Civilization, even the most primitive, implies opposition to nature. But precisely because of this, because humanity can only maintain itself by managing, thwarting, and tyrannizing over nature, we cannot fashion a truly human life, let alone survive, without reverence for the nonhuman.

Indian farmers and hunters care more for nature than we do, because they are less insulated from it than we are. They treat nature with greater respect, because they know the painful or lethal consequences of demanding too much from it. Whenever *we* go too far (by polluting the rivers we drink from, say), we can always contrive to dodge or postpone the consequences, or so we imagine. But inviting nemesis in this manner is both impious and irrational. Modern industrial societies borrow recklessly from nature and then put off repayment, whereas ecological piety insists on squaring accounts as you go along. It refuses to play fast and loose with the economy of the universe.

In an article on Zuñi ritual poetry, Ruth Bunzel describes how each morning Zuñis stand in front of their houses and make an offering of cornmeal to the sun with the following prayer:

> Now this day,
> My sun father,
> Now that you have come out standing to your sacred place,
> That from which we draw the water of life,
> Prayer meal,
> Here I give to you.
>
> Your long life,
> Your old age,
> Your waters,
> Your seeds,
> Your riches,
> Your power,
> Your strong spirit,
> All these to me may you grant.

To us this worship is a mystical, esoteric rite, but to the Zuñis (to the few individuals, anyway, who may still practice it, half a century after Bunzel wrote) it is simply an act of justice. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica* likewise defines religion as a function of justice—giving God his due. Ecological piety, at bottom, is not a matter of enthusiastic gestures, but of giving nature its due. As in traditional theology, man has the freedom to commit injustice, but not the power to escape punishment. Nature, like God, will not be mocked. The genius of religion is not only that it accepts this cosmic truth (making a virtue of necessity, so to speak), but that it embraces it with joy.

– Peter Heinegg

3. Fields of Danger and the Wilderness of Wisdom

Like cows in the dairy advertisement, professional people like to be outstanding in their fields. Fields assure safety, comfort, nourishment, and identity to those who inhabit them, and they provide a familiar surrounding where large surprises or threats are unlikely to occur. They are artificial spaces designed and controlled for maximum efficiency, fencing out whatever is unwanted or too complicated, and encouraging whatever single crop the field is intended to produce. Fields are intentional distortions of reality in the interests of tidiness and efficiency.

Left to its own devices, reality is neither tidy nor efficient, nor does it comfortably tolerate fences and fields. The real world is composed of astonishing patterns of complexity which shade and grade into one another in endless and random configurations. Its boundaries are fluid or permeable at all levels from the sub-atomic to the cerebral. Time, matter, energy, and mentality interact to create whatever exists with little regard for what is needed or appropriate. The vast majority of evolved organisms, for instance, prove to be inadequate and are doomed to extinction; only about one percent find suitable niches and survive for relatively long periods. That is not to say that reality is necessarily chaotic, but merely that its processes are overwhelmingly complex and intricate. Reality is a wilderness.

Fields, we may assume, were invented as devices for taming reality and reducing natural complexity to more easily manageable proportions. Those Neolithic farmers who first hit upon the idea of raising single crops and enclosing their animals may not have realized the cultural importance of what they were doing, but they must surely have appreciated how easy it was to gather vegetable foods from a monocultural field and how gloriously simple hunting was when the animals could not run away. Farmer's fields became the enabling device which led to the domestication of plants and animals, permanent and elaborate human settlements, and stratified societies

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which allowed leisure to some people. Those gifted with leisure occupied themselves with philosophy and public affairs, but now these were divorced activities which bore little contact with the sensory and natural conditions of ordinary real life.

Such people as Plato and Aristotle fenced for themselves some very large fields of knowledge and praised the virtues of the contemplative life (cows in their fields appear to love contemplation, too). The benefits they gave to mankind have perhaps been enough justification for the labor of the many non-contemplatives who have always supported full-time thinkers like Plato and Aristotle. But of course everybody has a field, whether it be slavery or merchandising or farming, or whether one is a woman whose field is assumed to include reproduction, housekeeping, and childrearing. The agricultural idea of field specialization proved easily applicable to social occupations and social structuring. It promptly replaced the ancient traditions of hunting and gathering, both of which, incidentally, are contemplative and philosophical activities which are fully in touch with a whole natural setting and which use the whole human being. When agricultural and social specialization replaced hunting and gathering, mankind abandoned wholeness in favor of the fragmented but profitable way of life in the fields.

At the emergence of industrialized societies a few centuries ago, the field metaphor was well established and ripe to be applied to the fencing of human activities into ever smaller and more intense specializations. Old fields were further subdivided (philosophy was transformed into a score or more of philosophical disciplines), new alliances among fields emerged (science formed a compact with a field called technology and they have been fussing over the boundaries ever since), and entire new fields were mapped out, such as advertising, insurance, social service, and a field called "education." Now virtually everyone can boast a field which is a part of personal identity more surely than one's gender, family, or personality traits. We have persuaded ourselves that specialization is a necessary condition of survival in an industrialized and overpopulated world. That may be so, but field specialization has also become one of the most dangerous threats to the healthy continuation of natural and human processes.

Fragmentation and the failure to perceive context are necessary consequences of field specialization which have become serious threats to human well-being and to the stability of natual processes. The fencelines which define fields tell us not only what is within the fence, but what must be kept outside it. So scientists avoid ethics, artists abhor science, and engineers ignore esthetics as topics foreign to their chosen fields and probably threatening to their efficiency within their fields. Knowledge is thus circumscribed and shielded from the contexts which alone can give it depth and meaning. Habits of field thinking lead us to act imprudently and to misunderstand what we know. The intellectual and emotional myopia of field thinking have their consequences for all of us to see in the massive disruptions of environmental crisis, in the threats of destruction from nuclear warfare and nuclear peacefare, and in the mono-mental chaos that comes from many minds locked in their compartments, failing to understand that there is a world out there that refuses to confine itself to the artificial boundaries imposed by field thinking. However efficient they may be in producing information, fields are necessarily crisis-laden, and they are incapable of producing what we most need: wisdom.

It may be argued that field specialization is not artificial at all, but is a normal human extension of the many tendencies toward specialization which are evident in natural evolutionary processes. There is a big difference, however, between an ecological niche achieved through evolutionary adaptation and a specialized field created by human judgment. Speciation is specialization, as plants and animals are modified over time to adapt to environmental changes and to ecological succession. The governing principle here is for the organism to modify its own structure and behavior to suit the ever-changing circumstances of its surroundings. Field specialization, as it has been applied since Neolithic times by human beings, goes in exactly the opposite direction. Its purpose is to restrain and to modify the existing world—whether it be a body of land or a body of knowledge—to accomodate human wishes and to serve human ends. If humans were to use their knowledge of the world as other animals do, to adapt to natural environments rather than to control them, then we, too, would have niches rather than fields to live in, and we would be part of natural reality rather than at war with it.

Claude Levi-Strauss has given us the useful concept of "bricolage" as a major mode of human thought that is rooted deeply in our evolutionary history.[1] The *bricoleur* (a French term for an inspired handyman, with no good English equivalent) is the student, teacher, or craftsman who creates useful things from cast-off odds and ends which others have found to be useless. "The bricoleur," says Levi-Strauss, "is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project." In bricolage, "it is always earlier ends which are called upon to play the part of means: the signified changes into the signifying and vice versa." With what result? In bricolage, the result "will always be a compromise between the structure of the instrumental set and that of the project. Once it materializes, the project will therefore inevitably be at a remove from the initial aim." Bricolage is the mentality of synthesis, a technique for creating, learning, and expressing human understanding, using whatever is present and what remains from the past to achieve an integrating form. That is what mythical thinking does, and it is what scientific and philosophical thought might do if they were freed from the manipulative purposiveness imposed by field specializations.

Evolutionary history is itself a long story of bricolage, according to François Jacob of the Pasteur Institute in Paris. Jacob argues provocatively that "Evolution behaves like a tinkerer (bricoleur) who, during eons upon eons, would slowly modify his work, unceasingly retouching it, cutting here, lengthening there, seizing the opportunities to adapt it progressively to its new use."[2] Unlike the engineer, the tinkerer or bricoleur does not have a grand plan or established criteria of excellence, but uses whatever is at hand to accomplish a creation that is likely to surprise even himself. The living forms that make up the natural world, including humanity, are the products of

1. Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966, pp. 16-30.
2. François Jacob, "Evolution and Tinkering." *Science*, 10 June 1977, p. 1164.

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such tinkering. Jacob further applied the tinkerer's art to the evolution of the human brain: "the formation of a dominating neocortex coupled with the persistence of a nervous and hormonal system partially, but not totally under the rule of the neocortex—strongly resembles the tinkerer's procedure. It is somewhat like adding a jet engine to an old horse cart." If that indeed is what our mental vehicle is like (mine usually feels that way), we had better drive with great care.

Bricolage and tinkering may seem like undignified methodologies for the conduct of evolution, science and philosophy. But consider the alternatives. What if there had been a conference of biologists at the beginning of creation to plan and implement the best possible strategies for the evolutionary development of life on the planet Earth? And of course there would have been a later conference of professional fields when it came time to introduce mankind, and another still when the development of human mentality was to be implemented. One can imagine gigantic trade-offs and compromises as engineers presented their cost/benefit analyses, as environmental impact studies were pursued, and as the professional societies and academic departments struggled with one another to assure that the needs of their respective fields were met by the new creation. I'll settle for our history of evolutionary bricolage, thank you.

What we have inherited from that history, our multileveled brain linked in many ways to our bodily functions and to our natural environments, is not a bad instrument for comprehending the world, providing we do not restrict its functions by the erection of artificial barriers. We are capable of perceiving clearly a many-dimensional world, of feeling deeply about it, of relating to one another and to other species in many ways, of analyzing logically our experiences and thoughts, and of bringing unlikely aspects of our awareness into creative new combinations. We are evidently designed for wholeness, or at least we are capable of it. That we have nevertheless elected our own fragmentation by arbitrarily building borders around parts of our lives is one of our saddest errors.

The special state of human mental and spiritual wholeness is called wisdom. Wisdom is by nature a perception of relativity and relationships. It is an awareness of the wholeness of things which does not lose sight of their particularity and concreteness or of the intricacies of the relationships among things. It is where left and right brains come together in a union of logic and poetry and sensation, and where self-awareness no longer is at odds with perceptions of the external world. Wisdom cannot be confined to a field, nor is it a discipline; it is the consciousness of wholeness and integrity which transcends both.

Fields make us smart and fat, but not wise. However useful and efficient it may seem to enforce boundaries of knowledge in the interest of high productivity, our great need now is for the unbounded insights of wisdom. It is possible to raise a crop of information in a field, and perhaps even to cultivate knowledge, but no one ever found wisdom there. Wisdom grows in a wilderness context. It is the state of complexity understood and relationships accepted.

The interdisciplinary movement that is crawling through universities these days is not an academic fad, but a response to the growing need among people everywhere to find a new sense of integrity for their own lives and for their understanding of the world around them. It is in part a corrective movement intended to combat the fragmentation that has resulted from centuries of field specialization. But it is also a creative effort directed toward greater wholeness and integration of human knowledge. The fences must come down to correct past errors and distortions, but at the same time we must learn new ways to live in the wilderness of wholeness where our best hope for the future lies.

The search for wisdom will require that we re-think many of our values, that we restructure some of our institutions, and that we revise our notions of personal and professional identity. A meaningful alliance among the value systems of science, art, and technology is now being created because of the new necessities faced by each of those "fields." Education, too, is ordering itself anew in response to recent discoveries about the nature of the human mind and its learning processes, and as we increasingly discover that "training for a field" is not a sufficient purpose for education in a world where learning must be a lifelong process with many different stages and diverse focal points. And perhaps we are close to a breakthrough that will permit us to see our knowledge not as part of our personal identities, but as a common possession that links us to one another and to the world around us. Synthesis is in the air—which is a good place for it, where it can see beyond the fields and fenceposts.

Let me also suggest a small experiment that might be tried by academic and professional people. I can predict that all will hear many times the same insidious question: "What is your field?" It would be interesting to see what would happen if we all avoided asking that question of others, and if we try not to answer when it is asked of us. We might feel a bit naked at first without a field, but perhaps it would be a step towards climbing over the fences that limit our imaginations. And, of course, if we really feel pressed to answer, we could always say, "Why, my specialty is bricolage." – *Joseph W. Meeker*

4. A Response to "Fields of Danger"

Since I am a bricoleur myself, my sympathy goes all out towards "Fields of Danger and the Wilderness of Wisdom" by J. W. Meeker. That said, I would like to do a variation on the theme and paraphrase the last sentence of the paper, "*Why, my specialty is prototyping. That is to say, a lot of bricolage on a lot of field specialization crutches.*" The *make-do* of bricolage (or tinkering) seems to characterize prototyping more than characterizing "production," and by production I do not mean only mass-production or assembly-line techniques but also any physiological process that has found its own niche within the frugal order of living nature.

Prototyping is that process which borrows from the elements pre-defined as field specialization for certain

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other purposes and, adopting them by an act of adaptation (compromise) to a new purpose, satisfies the intent of the prototype in question.

At this point, what a field of specialization seems to offer is the possibility of taking those adopted elements one by one and transforming them into specifically designed components. The prototype is, thus, not the conclusive aim of the search. From the prototype comes the production line, be it for a bolt or for a mouse. A bolt will have no use for bricolage. The mouse will "bricole" within its own post-bricolage genetic constant.

The soft spot of bricolage is that the leniency offered to the *make-do* part fitting in the prototype becomes implausible—in fact, inadmissible in the final version. Consequent to the refinement of the prototype, the soft spot in the final version might be that since the actual pressure under which the prototype comes into being cannot linger within the analytical and clinical procedure of the specific design, (then) the hidden reasons which have a say in adopting the *can-do* parts in the prototype can easily elude the analyst-technician and, consequently, the value or the quality present in the prototype may be lost. This is a case of the *field syndrome* killing the *wilderness of wisdom*.

How far does prototyping, that is bricolage, go in the evolutionary progression? Or to put it differently, is evolution purely made of bricolages, that is of bricolage of bricolages, ad infinitum? Is bricolage a temporary solution or is it real fitness? Ultimately, does *make-do* stand for wisdom or for expediency? Can a process like evolution, carried to its possible conclusion, be up to its aim if *make-do* is the only "technology" of its becoming?

What if bricolage is retrogressed to the "first instance"? Bricolage is predicated in elements *to bricole with*, but these elements are not the linear derivation of bricolages upon bricolages. They are the results of a rethinking of *make-do* into the field of specialization responses, as branched off, feedback shoots from and to the main trunk.

The hammer does not remain a stone splinter roped to a wood stick (the bricolage of a stone and a stick roped together). But in a way the exasperation of a process based only on bricolage would define a world in which carpenters would, in fact, not so much strike splinters (nails) with a prehistoric hammer, but indeed, in an even longer if not total retrogression where "the ape carpenters" would turn their first into bloody pulps, to nail splinters into . . . what?

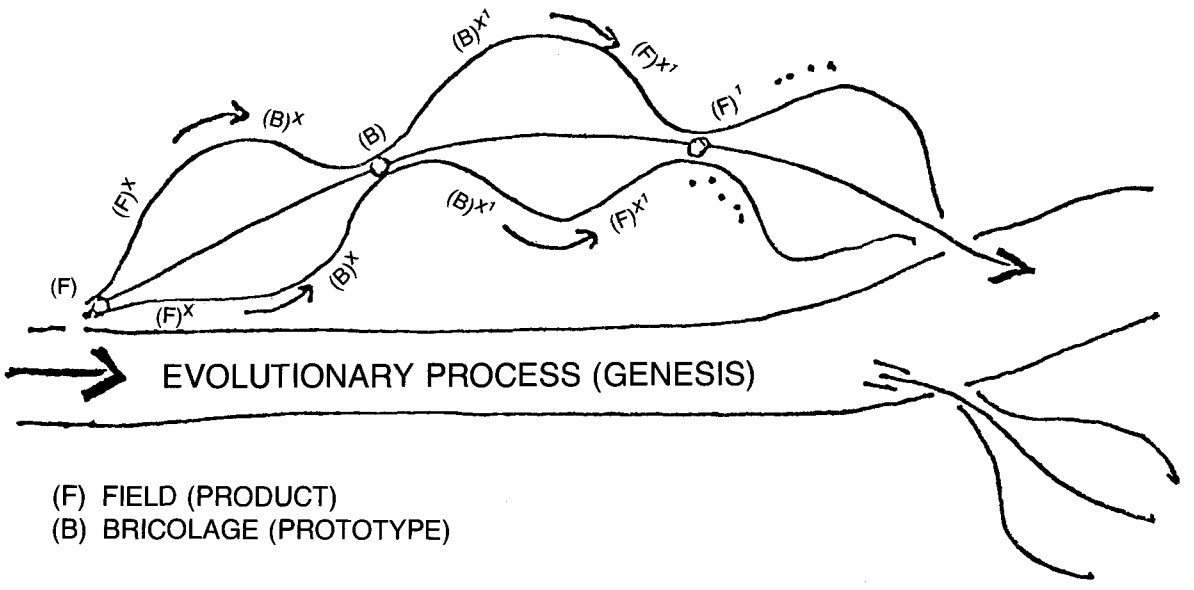
What is the result (F)x of field specialization in a specific context, (Product (F)) becomes element for bricolage, tinkering (B)x in a new context (B). Seemingly once the resulting elements from such tinkering have been substituted with specific elements $(F)x^1$ such prototype becomes a product $(F)^1$ and so on.

At times, the physicist must leave his senses and become a fanatic of the "particle field" (field of specialization). That will make him probe single-mindedly into ever-narrowing and deepening crevices of reality. Then at times he must exit from its trance and plunge into the "poetry" of feeling and go on tinkering with abandon. The absence of one of the the two modes may well cause the other to become irrelevant or dangerous. Together as two synergistic work horses they define prototyping (they don't necessarily come from the same individual).

Prototyping, that is to say, a lot of bricolage on a lot of field specialization crutches.

Both the anti-science fanatic, tinkering the world into smithereens held together with rubber bands, and the bigot technologist administering "knowledge" into monumental bureaucratic goddesses are poorly serving man, if man is to serve the notion of a wilderness of wisdom slowly disentangling its own potential grace from the pure savagery of the original, uncontaminated, dumb cosmos.

– *Paolo Soleri*



BRUCE BERGER is a poet (in Commonweal *and* Western Humanities Review), *prose writer (*Yale Review *and* Mountain Gazette), *a pianist (here and abroad), and a backpacker. He lives in Arizona. . . . PETER HEINEGG was educated at Fordham and Harvard universities, and presently teaches comparative literature at Union College. He is working on a book dealing with ecological religion. . . . JOSEPH W. MEEKER is the NAR's environment editor, writing from Athabasca University in Edmonton, Alberta. . . . PAOLO SOLERI is the well-known architect and futurist; he lives and works (and dreams) in Scottsdale, Arizona.*

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BRIAN SWANN

BLANK SEQUENCE

(i)

It is where it was going
Any further and the end is not in sight

It is a great wandering to a point between all points
It insists in bringing out the indigenous

It is its own cognate

What I have written is not what it says

(ii)

There is no forgetting
Nightmares stick to commonplace
and history believes in itself

To see the results you stand
and escape nowhere
There is everything that existed despite you

You had composed the event before it arrived
You had drugged the dogs and thought
they'd never bite again

That is you on the red splotch
no more to tell

Explaining your death to yourself

(iii)

I have concentrated on my eyes
Consequently I cannot see very well

I ask you to see for me
& answer how long how far where & so forth

At the farthest tip of my darkness
I see what you describe

(iv)

Inside it is warm
A stalk breathes out &
we breathe in

There are all the appearances
of a fresh start
Begin

The pull of two moons
leaves you exhausted
Heaven is not for the poor

(v)

The fight has gone out

At the point where land and sea lock
an angel preens

She has sat there for ages
the color of pinmould

The sky wouldn't collapse
without her

I look down
A bitch in heat stains the snow
with a crimson bird's wing

(vi)

There is an echo coloring up
It is ready to redeem the world

But the world stands tight
There are no loose ends

So the wolf swallows all and the red
gleams through white flanks

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. . . hard times in Ward 12, Adolph Meyer Building; R.I. Medical Center; Howard, Rhode Island—winter of 1968-9

MICHAEL ANDRYC

waiting for the universe to blow over

A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:

On the day before his birthday the Author took sleeping pills in a park in Providence, Rhode Island and lay down on the ground waiting to die. The snow fell into his eyes. People passed by. Nothing happened. He hadn't taken enough. He got up. He walked. He ran.

He stopped one person and told him he had tried to commit suicide. The look on the person's face was very interesting.

He tried to find a friend's house. He had the address in his coat. He looked. It wasn't there. He realized he had changed coats. The street was one thousand miles long. He started at one end knocking on doors. Three hundred people had never heard of his friend.

He ran to a phone. He called his mother and told her goodbye he was going to die.

Then he stopped a girl and asked her for a ride home. He would pay her fifteen dollars. It wasn't her car, it was her boyfriend's but he would take the Author, who said he was sick, home. First they wanted to stop for ice cream. Did the Author want some? No, said the Author. But there was no hurry.

He sat in the car

MICHAEL ANDRYC writes from Laramie, Wyoming. This is his first appearance in the NAR.

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1. Possibly Ken

Possibly Ken, in search of himself, looked into a pool for his reflection and saw a poolroom, instead, with his face on every ball on the table. Dreams of men with beards in blue overalls holding cue sticks against his chin probably came later. Ken, alone, lost, tired, needed a helping hand.

He found that hand in the Lord.

When you go, Ken, your heart goes to God. You have a friend in Jesus, Ken. God gives a damn.

In search of himself in a room full of men who whispered about women though none were to be seen . . . Ken found himself. The pooltable was made of skin which, said the men, had been stripped off the bodies of women.

Did Jesus allow this? asked Ken.

The men nodded their heads and whispered of Jesus and Ken. On the bulletin board was a paper which told a story about Ken:

AM I IN HEAVEN? it read.

Where are all the women? it asked. It answered: Women were, at one time, thought to be an extension of men. This was later changed to: Women were once thought to be men. Women, however, have since vanished from the poolroom.

Ken, at this very moment, is wondering, is searching. The faces on the pool balls were his.

Jesus spoke to him in the men's room.

Flush the toilet, He said. He said, Pull the chain.

Just a moment, Ken said. When you go, where does your heart go?

To God, Jesus said. Flush the toilet, Jesus said. Jesus, it smells. In the process he referred to a certain movie called HOW COME? which he said was playing everywhere. Then he opened the door.

The smells came into the poolroom where Ken was, and wherever Ken was, the Lord was, too.

Possibly Ken, who always carried a Gideon Bible, was being held captive by devils—possibly he allowed them to shave his head (but not his moustache) to please them. Ken was in a room full of devils who had names such as Arthur, Neil, Frank, The Black Guy, The Junkie, Bruno and Michael. And there was Lucy who had a baby sometime during the night, any night, but could never find it.

Late at night in hell when I was in my bed I heard Lucy calling, Where's my baby?

What baby? Sheeit, you ain't had no baby, you nut.

Still, Lucy went up and down the corridors of hell looking for his baby and begging cigarettes.

Ken would read from the Bible to the devils.

The devils would laugh.

Ken said he was Jesus.

The devils asked to see his wounds.

Ken hid his hands. He was not Jesus and he knew it because he had seen Jesus and talked with Him. He told me this. Besides Ken, before he thought he was Jesus, had been a sculptor.

It could even be that Ken, who looked cool at all times, came out of the men's room to see Jesus playing pool with the devils and the men with beards in blue overalls. Faces of women were on the pool balls now. They screamed as they rolled across the table.

How could you allow this? Ken asked Jesus.

Jesus said it was not in the Bible.

The devils laughed.

Will my heart go to God when I'm gone? Ken asked Jesus.

Jesus said, Put your trust in the man with the big white beard.

Where is the man with the big white beard? asked Ken.

Jesus looked up from the pooltable, toward the ceiling.

The devils stopped laughing.

The men in overalls looked at Ken.

Where are the women? Ken asked

Gone, Jesus said. Jesus said, You have only to look at yourself to see where.

Possibly Ken walked into the men's room, looked in the mirror for his reflection and saw himself with his face on fire, saying, I WILL MAKE YOU WELL, FOR I AM GOD.

2. Al

Al Gaines used to play piano. He was sure of his fingers and his fingers, back then, were sure of him. He had always hoped to be a great pianist. He had been in the institution for six years, waiting for the universe to blow over. He had had so many shock treatments he could remember what it was like as an embryo. But he couldn't remember what had happened five minutes ago.

On the outside he was a jeweler. But he was in no hurry to leave. He said he knew what it was like on the outside.

"I've got a good thing going here," he said. "I do a little work and I get room and board. The rest of the day is *mine*."

"If you wanted to, how would you get out?" I asked.

"When my doctor asks, 'Do you hear voices, Al?' all I have to say is, 'Yes, doctor. I hear your voice and my voice.'"

3. Bruno

When Bruno looked out the window, he saw purple snow. He'd ease up slowly, peeking from the corners of his eyes, for the purple snow was crafty—the window could not always contain it and it often got away. Sometimes he'd look and it'd be there for a second. Sometimes it was there for days. Sometimes it got mad and went away and never came back.

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It was hard to tell.

But everyone knew when it was there because Bruno would never speak unless he had seen it. And whenever he did speak he would sing a song. Leaning against the glass, he would stare out, draw a deep breath and sing, 'Purple Shadows On The Snow.'

It was a sad song.

Sometimes it had no tune and no words.

Bruno never appeared to notice anyone or anything.

He'd kill time eating cigarette butts, staring into space, pacing the floor until the purple snow came to the window again.

He shaved his face in expectation every morning with an electric razor that someone would have to plug in for him and put in his hand, but somehow he would forget to shave below his chin. Nobody noticed his beard growing long—least of all Bruno himself. He wandered about as if moved by magnets. The only thing that mattered was the purple snow.

4. The Cowboy

He had a steel plate in the top of his head where the bone had been removed. Three of his ribs were plastic. His wrists worked on aluminum hinges and a false kneecap floated under the skin. All this was a result of stealing cars and smashing them against walls, telephone poles, etc. He didn't know why he stole the cars or why he wrecked them.

In the room where time stands still, in the room where it is always day or always nite, the cowboy showed everybody a trick. He'd tear matches out of a book and peel them so they looked like little men and little women. Then he placed them on top of each other and set them on fire. The bodies squirmed. Flaming penises shot into sulphur vaginas. . .

5. Three Views of Neil, Wolfman

Neil in the morning sitting in his chair rocking back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

To himself:

"I didn't mean to make her mad! I didn't mean to make her mad! Shut up, Neil! Keep your mouth shut! You're going to get in big trouble, Neil!"—while he rocks back and forth.

If we walk over and say hello, he doesn't notice. The dialogue goes on:

"Tell her you'll be good, Neil. Tell her you didn't mean to make her mad! Shut up, Neil! Shut up!"

The chairs are pushed aside for the floor to be mopped. Neil paces back and forth, gradually working his way to the game table. He picks a card from the deck. It wiggles in his hand like a wounded insect. It catches fire. Neil screams, drops the card, whispers to himself.

Then everyone lines up and it's time for breakfast.

II.

Neil in the dayroom looking right to left. His left eyes ask:

"Y-you ever b-b-been to N-New York? The c-city?"

The Author says he has.

"Wh-wh-when the b-buses run?"

The Author doesn't know. He has a picture of the Empire State Building in his wallet. He gives it to the man.

Neil's eyes look straight at him but he tilts his head:

"Can I have a dime?"

III.

Scarecrow Neil, freezing in his baggy suit jacket. Wolfman Neil, curly hair and face like a skull, charcoal eyes.

"This th-the New York b-b-bus sta-station?"

Dialing all the numbers on the dial, trying to make a connection that doesn't exist.

Shouting into the phone.

Shivering in the phone booth and the snow is coming down.

His eyes are going left and right, left and right.

In the dayroom the Ace of Spades is leaping off the deck.

The cards have burst into flames.

"Don't make me mad, Neil! You're going to get in big trouble!"

We hear him coming down the hall. We are in the shower room.

Neil is mumbling as he comes in.

His eyes look at the floor. He pleads:

"Can I have a dime?"

He has borrowed dimes from us all. There are no dimes left in the world. No one speaks.

Neil, Wolfman, is waiting, the bus is waiting, the city is waiting.

No one speaks.

Someone offers him a roll of life-savers.

Neil screams: "I don't want candy! No candy! No candy!"

He rushes out of the shower room and begins pacing.

His eyes are shooting back and forth.

The nurse is after him with a needle. "Come on, Neil. Be a good boy." A young girl, this nurse, with black hair and hairy arms and a little fringe of mustache on her upper lip.

"Shut up, Neil! You're going to get in trouble!"

The deck of cards is burning so fast he can hardly breathe.

He yells:

"No! Nooooo! I'm ok! No!"

Two attendants hold him down.

The nurse sticks the needle in.

Neil is on his way to New York. □

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JAMES GALLANT

PRELUDES & EVOLUTIONS

1. Nine Preludes

for Robert Bly

We are locked into winter here in Minneapolis, late in February. We shall not get out.

I am in a stall cleaning a toilet bowl in north Minneapolis—a failure in life, at last; I think only cowardice kept me from it long ago. There used to be a chain of doughnut shops in the Middle West whose tablemats recommended: *Keep Your Eye upon the Doughnut, Not upon the Hole.* I have not taken that advice.

A helicopter put-puts over, low. I drop my bowl mop, open a window in the boys' room of the Catholic School. I have been known to chase a fire truck, in February. The flying apparatus labors across a huge full moon so three-dimensional the fingertips declare a knowledge of her craters and declivities. The sky just before dusk, as soft and blue as children's construction paper, is a surprise; I feel the sky is going to be friendly again, and the feeling must somehow faintly matter: I start whistling. Our feelings are always setting their alarm clocks.

2.

I am in perfect health—being skinny, now, as I was made to be. Unhappier and wealthier as a teacher, I was also plumper.

When I was in college, once I saw a picture of a handsome old Tibetan guru—lean as I am now—wearing only a loin cloth and the caption was: *A Handsome Old Guru of Tibet.* I knew right then and there, what I wanted to be in life was A Handsome Old Guru of Tibet. Perhaps we grow the kinds of bodies that we really want. Thin girls with great breasts are always ferociously willful.

When my wife was pregnant, I was not thinking much about being like the Old Guru of Tibet, but about what kind of child I would really want, and I decided it would be a girl, extremely beautiful and outgoing—not at all like me. That was what we got, too, so maybe we all get the children that we really want.

I am in perfect skinny health—very poor and happy—looking forward to the time when my body will have surpassed The Handsome Old Guru's and started falling apart, because a friend of mine with a fatal illness told me once: *If you healthy ones had any idea of the relief in dying, great flocks of souls would be streaking through the air.*

3.

After writing all morning long, I walk on Lowry Hill overlooking Minneapolis. The few really tall buildings in the city—St. Mary's Basilica, the Foshay Tower, the IDS Building—stand there, gray, one by one, distinct and separate and pale on the grey winter sky, looking very two-dimensional, like paper cutouts.

They might just be glued there. Someone might turn a page.

I was down there in the middle of all that once, body and soul, I cannot imagine how; I would rather die than go back there now, for a living.

I have never been more hopeful than now, since I achieved failure. Failure, I think, must be the wave of the future. I have even learned how to use the exclamation point—from Robert Bly. I sent him a poem, and he did not accept the poem for the book he was assembling, but he wrote me a note about the poem in which he used three exclamation points—and now I am using them!

4.

In a dream, I am going up the wall of a building on my ladder on a foggy night. I am a thief. I pause in my climbing, turn, look down. The fog has spread over everything in the foreground, and only the tips of the tombstones peer out over it. But in the distance I can see the skyline of Minneapolis, and the weather ball on top of the Northwestern Bank Building is blinking white, which

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means we shall have the first snowfall of the year. I cannot wait for it to come and cover everything.

I also know if I step off the ladder I will fly.

5.

My mind was disciplined as a scholar's, and then one day it began to wander, from my plump body, and once it started wouldn't stop. My department chairman gave me fishy looks and said I lacked the discipline of the mind, and one thing led to another, and here I am skinny as a Handsome Old Guru of Tibet, cleaning toilets, writing poetry.

Blake said, if the fool persists in his folly, he will grow wise.

I do not know why I am so happy with a mop and a bucket of water. All of my ancestors were laborers, perhaps—though really caring little about them, in my transit into the future, I have not kept track of what they were. If all my ancestors were laborers, perhaps in wielding my mop I am finally satisfying them in my body, which is, to some extent, theirs.

—Yes! Yes! they exclaim, splashing happily in my gene pool.

Backward is forward, we mop men know.

The other day, for old time's sake, I read a very scholarly essay on suffering, evil, and hope in Old Testament history, watching the memory of the fellow who wrote it ticking off the usual, comfortable associations.

"Steeped in the tradition," I might have said once, as we used to do, admiring someone grown as remote as possible from our very common life—in words, in the mind. (We never would inquire about what was going on in the *will,* as if that did not matter.)

I watched this fellow erecting his little artifice of words—intelligible words, no doubt living words once, on someone's tongue. Well, he is a university man, makes a decent living at that sort of thing.

He is probably shaped like a balloon, but there is hope for him. A person has to learn very slowly that whatever has survival value in America always falsifies and deadens. Failure is the wave of the future.

6.

Going to work today, I pass St. Mary's Basilica, its great green dome only faintly visible through the heavy fog that seems to protect me, as the fog did in my dream. My real self or self-lessness, from the morning (when I write) is preserved a little longer in the day by the fog from a world I do not disdain entering.

Why should I? Soon I will be chatting with the nuns, tinkering with my mops, swinging toward unconsciousness along hallways turning to rivers.

If I had not been unhappy yesterday all day for tossing in my sleep the night before, would I be turning happy janitor from happy poet of an hour ago?

The fat dome on St. Mary's is mimicking St. Peter's off in Rome!

7.

My daughter, Sarah, eight, with scarcely any religious training, says it will be nice dying and going back where you started from, to see how everything is going now with God.

When she was four, she said she had lived before, though she was evasive when we asked her where and when. I would ask:

—Does everybody have more than one life?

—No, just some.

A pluralistic afterlife? Perhaps we get the kind of afterlife we really want.

Sarah's face was troubled the other day. She said it was so hard, now, remembering what it was like before you came down here.

8.

The huge photograph of Giacometti (1901-1966) hangs beside his show of drawings in the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. The drawings are very simple, so that I want to call them "sketches." There are usually only a few lines on each paper.

The sketches are like notes on silence and invisibility. Here is an artist who did not believe in nature.

Everywhere in his portraits is the head of death; you are made to look *behind* eyes to faintly pencilled circles, adumbrations of the holes in skulls. He denies concrete life.

Repetitively, in sketch after sketch, each dated carefully as if he were always going progressively deeper into something familiar. And *always* death—

Again and again and again, as if it were an essential aspect of this activity that carried Giacometti alive in spirit through his sixty-fifth year,

So that in 1974 a woman in Minneapolis standing by the artist's photograph would say to her husband: "A fine face, a fine face"—

As it had, indeed, become.

In 1974, I wrote a poem about what the woman said. Now I write a different, better one in 1975,

And tomorrow I may just revise the daylights out of *that.* (What joy and solace, revising poems, feeling you are one step from perfection nine days in a row! It is like making love to the same woman many times!)

—Think of the brain cells we have lost since we were twenty-five, I say to my wife, who says:

—Think of how the sex has improved.

—And the poetry.

9.

How could there ever be a *content* in writing? Characters, settings, stories? I have fantasies sometimes of living in a newly settled continent, going about with pencil and pad capturing the essence of the place in words—Crevecoeur in Ohio!

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The truth always calls me back, since what I really want to hear is this lyric voice, not my own, natural one, speaking simply and movingly—a star that wants so madly to move across a black sky at midnight, I just let it go. I want experience of this medium of grace, delivering us from sin, freeing us from the deadweight of the past, making us skinny as a Handsome Old Guru of Tibet.

I want to experience, forever, a heaven of my own willing, a source of joy for the creation of new worlds in whatever galaxy and aeon. There are absurd possibilities for boundless futures not my own.

It always feels as if something coming to an end is a beginning. □

2. Four Preludes, An Evolution Of Thought, A Fifth Prelude

I wrote the four preludes last July. They still interest me in March, but I am not satisfied with them.

1. Before he died, when we were children, my father used to take us out to the White Castle restaurant in Columbus, Ohio, to eat White Castle hamburgers. At the time, you could find White Castles in Toledo, Indianapolis, Columbus, Louisville, Minneapolis, St. Paul—the Middle Western towns in the old American Association baseball league, which no longer consists of teams from these towns.

Evansville, Des Moines, Omaha, and Tulsa are now towns in the American Association.

I used to live in Evansville, Indiana. Once I was standing by my office door in Evansville, and Paul Grabill said:

—My stomach hurts.

—What's the matter with it?

—Nothing, just been used a lot.

I ate White Castle hamburgers last a month ago, and I am happy to report they are still what they always were: tiny froths of onion, bun, and grease—three bites each. It was a nostalgic lunch.

For the first time in my life, I had, from eating White Castle hamburgers, a bellyache.

2. A person moves around a lot. When he thinks of death, he does not think of joining the clan on the hillside, or of flowers being placed overhead by female relatives with nothing else to do Memorial Day afternoon because the menfolk are listening to the Indianapolis 500 on the radio. Appropriate that his final resting place should be a jar of ashes on the mantle, which the wife or husband can carry about, when moving.

My Uncle Davis, who had traveled around all his life, through wives and states, met his end in a sixteen car pileup near Johnstown on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. He was cremated, although really his first choice of a final resting place would have been the Medical College of Virginia. The Medical College of Virginia is interested in typical specimens, so Uncle Davis's ashes fell into the hands of Aunt Libby in Marion, Ohio, who did not especially want them, or know what to do with them.

While vacationing in The South she emptied the jar in Pensacola.

That was where Uncle Davis had lived for a time.

3. The former officer in the Pakistan Army lives in the apartment above us. He was once a landowner in Pakistan, and he went to "the West Point of Pakistan."

He has a yellowed photograph proving that, as a boy, he once sat down to dinner with Mahatma Gandhi.

He is unemployed, since a former Pakistan landowner cannot accept just any work, even if it were offered him; so, he instructs me how to mow a lawn properly, I being the caretaker for our apartment building.

He trains the tomatoes to crawl up stakes in our small backyard all summer, beans to march in straight rows.

He also drinks a great deal.

My wife and I are sitting on the steps together. My wife is about to take Ph.D. examinations at the university. The former officer in the Pakistan Army asks me:

—What is she being examined on?

—Freud, among other things.

My wife sits beside me on the porch.

—Ah, Dr. Fried.

He begins to lecture on Dr. Fried, about whom he clearly knows next to nothing.

Recently he heard the United States is going to send his wife and him back to Pakistan. But they have nothing to go back to now, in Pakistan. The American immigration officials assured them this would never happen.

4. In Delaware, Ohio, where I grew up, there was once a city hall with a clock tower, and in the 1930s, just before they blasted the old tower to make room for a new city hall, a local newspaper photographer on a nearby rooftop cocked his shutter, and the explosives went off, and the photographer fell down. While falling, he accidentally tripped the shutter of the camera, and a brilliant photograph resulted, showing the tower quite erect in air, shattered in a thousand pieces.

This photograph has been an inspiration to me throughout my life.

II.

All right.

The four preludes deal with transience, discontinuity in human affairs, death—good old universal themes, and all that. But I intended to say more in them, really—I am unsure just what it was.

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There was some floundering going on last July; but I see a kind of authenticity in the preludes, even as I could back then. I always know when things are going well in writing, because I am full of light and truth and grace.

I am also full of light and truth and grace *after* writing, in the afternoons, when I am janitoring in Minneapolis at the Catholic School.

Last July when I was writing preludes I was very contented in the afternoons scrubbing window frames in classrooms on the second floor. At five, as the sun was falling behind the church across the street, I would be looking down at the strange old Minneapolis laboring class parishioners going into church for evening mass. At that hour, in between church and school, the killdeers at low altitudes play helter-skelter games (rules and logic inaccessible to humanity). One day, noticing me up there in his milieu, one came to hover just beyond my pane of glass, his body motionless and wings awhirr. He stared at me with strangely blank eyes, and I returned the look in kind and thought how certain friendships are like drinking from a cold mountain stream.

"It must be lonely working all alone the way you do," a nice old parish woman said to me one day. I could not think of anything to say.

Last Christmas Eve, I was working at the school. No one had been around all afternoon and evening. At nine, with the portable radio in my hand blaring out Christmas carols, I strolled around the building, very free and unsupervised. How I loved the clean, well-lit corridors—the classrooms stripped of old wax, teachers, pupils, desks, chairs, books! And I started turning off the few lights burning in the building, until finally only one remained, at the very end of a hall, where in the cool night air of the corridor there stood the white barrel filled to the brim with newspaper shredded a week before by Sister Edith's gerbils. Beside it, the water fountain had been covered since September with a rag, formerly a woman's blouse, and there was a sign: OUT OF ORDER.

I flicked off the final light and walked about in the darkness, like the soul of a Pharaoh well-pleased with its tomb.

"I have found a home," I whispered, and the EXIT light at the end of the corridor fell on the dark red tile like a red moon on a red river, and just then the announcement came on the radio that Air Force radar at the North Pole had charted Santa's sleigh upon its southerly course, and then it was "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," as in an excess of joy I fell on my knees into the river of blood and cried out in anticipation of, as it were, The Newborn King.

III.

I have had a kind of revelation about the four preludes: They do not account for the future!

How stupid I was back in July!

There is an obsession with time in them, but always with time passing, time winding down, time the destructive ironist. All well and good—but the human will (not to mention all of animated nature) is generally disposed very well toward the future, progress, and survival—whether or not my preludes are.

I catch myself in a sort of contradiction, too. There I was in July, a creature of the future rising daily, according to my schedule, downing my "natural" breakfast for my health, writing mediocre stuff for hours in great happiness, seeking out with a kind of relief the unconsciousness of physical work later in the day, looking forward to the chatter and beer with my wife late at night—all the while writing preludes in which there is no future!

(And the futureless preludes, meanwhile, were going about their metaphysical business, stimulating lines of thought which have led to the present project in writing, which is becoming a source of others, and so on. Something in us is trying to understand itself in the long run of time.)

I am unaccounted for in my own preludes!

IV.

Transience, mortality, discontinuity: I think I begin to understand the four preludes. They *must* be understood, too, so that last July's work can be redeemed. Mike, my young doctor friend, says the body is like a tree: cut away the bad part and the rest goes on—but the mind and imagination are not like that; no, I am getting too old and unamerican for that kind of evasion.

I tend to understand creative process in developmental terms—as progress, evolution, ramification, unfolding. Creative process stands opposite every form of fixity and stasis. Logically considered, the transience and death which so dominate my attention in the four preludes are *aspects of* progress; progress, being sequential, *involves* change and points of termination, even as it surpasses them; that is something to keep in mind.

But a psychological observation may be even more germane in thinking about the preludes. A person committed to imaginative progress becomes involved in practical risk, almost necessarily, surpassing as he does the static myths and imaginative forms which keep the practical world humming or stumbling along. (I can be more specific: *I* am involved in risks.) Risk forces upon the mind a strong awareness of vulnerability, thus of *mortality*. And a strong sense of mortality will easily flow over into one's apprehension of anything and everything, the imagination spontaneously creating the world as its own mirror image—the microcosm the matrix for the macrocosm. I had arrived in the four preludes at a world in which death, discontinuity, and transience were dominant facts of life—a custodial world whirling on the axis of the minimum wage! But were not the images of transience and death, so laden for me with imaginative force last summer simply the strong shadows thrown by the commitment to creative progress itself?

V.

I have been rereading Thomas Altizer's *The Descent into Hell* (1971)—because of what I have been writing. And I

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understand the work now better than previously (because of what I have been writing.)

Altizer helps me realize that creative progress is directed, finally, at some ineffable end, some ultimate clarity of vision, some total rendering of all that is unconscious into consciousness. If actually realized, that end would be nothing less than The New Aeon, the Kingdom of Heaven, the visionary future of Biblical prophecy. And, as Altizer points out, visions of The New Aeon in Biblical prophecy are inseparable from a pessimism about contemporary life, negative imagery, the prediction of the end of the world, etc.

So, simultaneously to embrace the idea of the end of the world (cf. Buddhist Three Signs of Being, my four preludes) *and* to anticipate The New Aeon *is* to be thinking prophetically!

My God, I may have learned something from a Biblical scholar!

VI.

Among my literary remains, as they say, I have just found another prelude from last July. Only now have I understood its real implications.

5. At the landfill junkyard, the big mustachioed fellow stood there in the back of his pickup truck in bright sunlight sending heavy old wooden storm windows flying into the air with great heaves. They smashed down, one after another, in the trash, and we stood watching until he cocked his eyes in our direction, and his white teeth flashed out in the sun under the mustache.

Then he really threw one up in the air, and it really came down, and he looked at us, and we all broke out laughing. □

DAVID STEINGASS

TWO POEMS OF PURE PLACE

1. Nomad

Maine. Louisiana. California. The languid drift
of Ohio. I lived on the road, that endless border
slicing the country, full of nuggets of detail
insistent as goosebumps. Each time I left I'd say
burning the house. Get out what can be carried,
can't give the bastards a chance to draw bead.
That July morning I stared at humidity sweeping
in off the plains, flat as the ache behind my eyes,
I felt as mindless as blood. Caught in the dance of
motion, I was staring into myself saying how did I
end up in the Midwest, where I began?
Humidity, I knew then I'd always known, is
inland tidal waves. I was sad that there is a
number to the times I'll see my parents ruddy,
still aiming their imaginations directly at my life.
It is like living in November, that month of
turning away with uneasy heaviness, your life full
of the wrong friends or your arms alive with
kittens you must drown. That someone must be
left behind, and the number and direction of our
wheels, proves how deeply in love we are with
the stone age, November, and the migration of
our lives. My sadness is the feeling that America
is my body knowing that parts of the body grow
numb and always more numb until they are
unnameable buzzing presences. How many
fleets of cloud have sailed through this roof and
chimney and come out the other side? On a
certain day I stand with threadbare elbows and
launch burials into the dark sea that is America.

2. Agreeing to Hold Still

I see that everything maintains the
hummingbird's motion. Each tree dances
differently. I invent nails, and seed pods, and the
sea's hum of fornication. The log drum. I stare
into the mirror of a pool and pull out the
boomerang. My eyes become telescopes.
Nowhere is there an edge of space. I become
concerned with light years and the half-lives of
possibility. I feel the tiny explosions of grains in
earth. I welcome reincarnation as the limbs of
hardwood trees, or the bold thankfulness of
redstart and yellow-headed blackbird. I realize
why the grain of woods points to where the cat
always rolls on one patch of garden. What enters
the house passes through me. I begin to feel the
wind leave and try to lure me along. The Mona
Lisa-faces of barn owls look down on my sleep
and call softly into my dreams. A ladder winds up
the stations in the great shell of sound toward
silence at its inner, uppermost peak. Boys
dedicate their lives to emulating rocks balanced
on their heads. Girls live along the vibrations of
harp strings. I know every place a thing may lose
itself inside an eggshell: that missing texture is
the sense of history and poetry.

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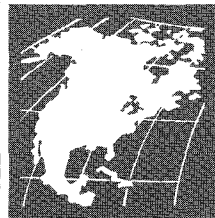

Robert Ian Scott

Poet as Prophet:
Jeffers' Unpublished Poems About World War II

As Santayana said, those who will not learn from history will repeat it—a cliché we love to say but hate to act upon, as the generally hostile reaction a generation ago to Jeffers' poems about the Second World War demonstrates. Perhaps now, with the appearance of a new edition of *The Double Axe* and of a dozen poems he left unpublished, we can look objectively at the disaster he foresaw, and at the ways he reacted to it. At the time, even Jeffers regretted what he called his "obsession with contemporary history that pins so many of these pieces to the calendar, like butterflies to cardboard," though he also felt that "the calm to look for" lay at the very heart of that violence.[1] Apparently no other poet writing in English saw that war so clearly as a mass-tragedy foreshadowing an even larger tragedy, the extinction of all mankind, or suffered so disastrous a loss of reputation and audience for saying so, even though the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had just made that extinction obviously possible.

Jeffers had no special sources of information or methods for his predictions: he read *Time*, and the New York *Times*, remembered what had happened, and worked by analogy to see what could happen if we failed to learn, and history did repeat. While arguments by analogy prove nothing, they can suggest possibilities, and the predictions Jeffers made have proved disturbingly accurate so far. In 1934, the poem "Rearmament" predicted the war which came in 1939. "The Bowl of Blood" has Hitler unwillingly predict that he will repeat Napoleon's mistake, invading Russia before finishing England, and will shoot himself to avoid captivity when the Russians and their allies trap him. Jeffers probably wrote the poem before Hitler had his armies invade Russia on June 21, 1941—Random House had the poem in print in the book *Be Angry at the Sun* by December of that year—and in fact Hitler did shoot himself in April, 1945, when the Russian, English, and other allied armies had him surrounded.[2]

But like Cassandra, Jeffers found his predictions unwanted. Possibly as a result, he left many of his poems about the war unpublished. At least twenty-six have survived in the Tor House collection of his papers in the Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas at Austin. James Shebl's book *In This Wild Water* and the new edition of *The Double Axe* Bill Hotchkiss and William Everson edited have eleven of them, including three of the four which first appeared in *Harper's Magazine* for February, 1976. These previously unpublished poems make the painful complexity of Jeffers' reactions to the war more obvious. Of the six included here, the first (and earliest) three show failures to learn will lead to yet another war, the fourth sees that failure as caused by or causing a bloodthirsty ignorance of the universe which Jeffers saw as God, the fifth shows Jeffers so exasperated with Franklin Roosevelt's failure to learn from the First World War that Jeffers lapses back into the Christianity he rejected as useless during that war, and the sixth poem advocates turning to the unhuman glory of the universe of stars to save ourselves from ourselves. I have transcribed all six from Jeffers' manuscripts; the second and sixth poems do not appear in Shebl's book or the new *Double Axe* or *Harper's*.

When the American Congress passed the Priorities Bill in May, 1941, giving Franklin Roosevelt powers no president had had before to control the country's industry for a war not yet declared, Jeffers predicted that "mischief" would result, perhaps because past rearmament programs had so generally ended with finding a use for the weapons produced and the soldiers conscripted. The first version comes from the Texas collection, and the second from the collection of Mrs. Blanche Matthias of San Francisco:

Miching Mallecho
(May, 1941)

Wagging their hoary heads, glaring through their bright spectacles,
The old gentlemen shout for war, while youth,
Amazed, unwilling, submissive, watches them. This is not normal,
But really ominous. It is good comedy,
But for a coming time it means mischief. The boys have memories.

The Old Gentlemen
(May, 1941)

Wagging their hoary heads, glaring through their bright spectacles,
The old gentlemen yell for war, while youth,
Surprised, unwilling, compliant, watches them. This is not normal
But really ominous. It is good comedy,
But for a coming time it means mischief. The boys have memories.
That famous revolution the false
Prophets have been prophesying now becomes possible here.

The title "Miching Mallecho" suggests how Jeffers saw

[1] *Be Angry at the Sun and Other Poems* (New York: Random House, 1941), i; *The Double Axe and Other Poems, including 11 Suppressed Poems, with a Foreword by William Everson and an Afterword by Bill Hotchkiss* (New York: Liveright, 1977), p 155-160. Donnan Jeffers, the Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas in Austin, and Mrs. Blanche Matthias have given permission for the publication of these poems.

[2] *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (New York: Random House, 1938), p 565; *Be Angry at the Sun*, p 77; James Shebl, *In This Wild Water* (Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1977).

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the war in May, 1941; the phrase hardly occurs in English outside Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* and discussions of it. That tragedy begins with nervous sentries; one of them asks why their country has begun making and buying "implements of war." These weapons prove useless, because the corruption of its rulers causes the tragedy. In act three, scene two, as they watch the dumb show before the play within the play, Ophelia asks Hamlet what that show means. He says "miching mallecho: it means mischief." It does—*micher,* to skulk, *malece,* malice—because it reveals the corruption which will soon destroy most of the court of Denmark, and because revealing it helps bring about that tragedy.

Apparently Jeffers saw history as tragic, the power corrupt rulers have as dangerous, and such patriotism as congressmen shouting for war as a dumb show, in every sense—as stupid, as a spectacle put on to impress someone, as saying nothing intelligent or new, and as a preview and omen of the much noisier war which will follow it. From tragedies, we might learn to behave in some other way, but probably won't for many years yet, or so Jeffers suggested in *Fourth Act,* a poem he wrote in January, 1942, eight months later, as he apparently still thought of the war in terms of *Hamlet:*

> It is scene two, act four, of the tragic farce *The Political Animal.* The hero reaches his apogee
> And ravages the whole planet; not even the insects, only perhaps bacteria, were ever so powerful.
> Not a good play, but you can see the author's intention: to disgust and shock. The tragic theme
> Is patriotism; the clowning is massacre. He wishes to turn humanity outward from its obsession
> In humanity, *a riveder le stelle.* He will have to pile on horrors; he will not convince you
> In a thousand years.[3]

In scene two, act four of *Hamlet,* Rosencrantz and Guildenstern come to collect Hamlet, who jokes about the old gentleman he has just murdered, that political animal Polonius. Here Hamlet seems his most clownish and most powerful—Claudius has just said how dangerous it is to let him range loose (III, iii), a feeling other animals may have about mankind—and more slaughters soon follow, as the play begins to pile on its horrors, and as the Second World War did after January, 1942.

Seen in this way, our history seems a tragedy which keeps repeating because from so much suffering we learn so little. Because of that stupidity, the author—God or the tragic poet—must go on adding horror after horror, which may explain Marx's comment that history repeats itself, first as tragedy and then as bloody farce. *Fourth Act* also echoes Darwin's comment that no other species has ever so dominated the earth as man does now, which makes our nightmarish history make sense as a tragic product of a violent evolution in which other species also rose to power, only to vanish. In making the nightmare make sense, Jeffers suggests a way to see the earth and ourselves as a part of the almost totally unhuman heavens as well as the scene and victims of the hell we keep making of our history.

Jeffers may have felt readers would miss or misunderstand his allusion to *Hamlet*; the later version avoids it, and suggests instead what the war may cause. "Prophets" may mean Marx and Engels, or those who predicted a revolution in America as a result of the depression the war ended. By delaying needed changes, and by increasing American delusions of grandeur, the war may have delayed that revolution, by helping to make it more complete when it does come—and certainly the increasing shortage of energy and the looting in New York City during the recent blackout make such a revolution seem more possible.

The accuracy of Jeffers' predictions suggests he found a meaningful order by seeing history as cyclic, as in this poem he wrote a year before American bombers began attacking France, "The Meddlers: June '41"—

C. G. Hanzlicek

THE NATURALIST

The naturalist
Has a red tag in his hand,
But he wants to see it on the eartip
Of an elk.

He runs her down by helicopter,
And she is so terrified,
For the first time in her life
She has no grace.

Legs splayed,
She pitches and tumbles,
Reaching for cover in the woods
At the foot of the drifted slope.

The syringe strikes her hip,
She charges on, then suddenly pauses.
Her knees touch and quiver
Until she buckles into the snow.

She's not hurt, he says,
She's tranquil, she feels no pain.
He is a physical man,
And to him pain is physical.

I take her slow face in my hands.
Her black eyes have no depth;
Our voices come to her
On the wind of another world.

But it is this world, this world
Of unforgettable panic
That will arrive again when she rises
To shake the snow from her flanks.

[3] *The Double Axe,* p 124 (in both editions, 1948 and 1977); Darwin, *The Descent of Man,* first American edition (New York, 1896), p 48.

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We are bound to meddle in the world's woe,
And bloody act follows fine phrase,
But the cant of twenty-five years ago
Is partly cancelled by today's;
The insanity that bit the fathers once
Is partly reversed upon the sons.

In this dark pain, in this fog of liars,
Still there's a devilish delight
In thinking of the first American fliers
Saluting France through a bomb sight,
Dropping the blast, banking the plane,
Saying "Lafayette, here we are again!"

That last word "again" suggests an idiot delight in destruction, and may remind us that while repetitions help give history and music their structure and meaning, the duplicity and destruction involved makes a joke of the last line's "fine phrase." Twenty-four years earlier, when he brought American troops to France to help fight a German invasion, repaying the French for helping the American revolution, General Pershing had said "Lafayette, here we are" in French. But once involved in foreign wars, America cannot seem to stop, so the repayment may come to seem worse than the debt. "Dark pain" echoes the "darkling plain" where "ignorant armies" fought by night which Matthew Arnold mentions in "Dover Beach"—another repetition, and reminder that we have yet to learn.

The manuscript of the next poem in the Texas collection has four titles: "Fantasy," "Armistice Day," "Future Armistice Day," and "Journey's End." Jeffers called the later version which he sent to Mrs. Matthias in 1941 or '42 "Next Armistice Day":

Finally in white innocence
The fighter planes like swallows dance,
The bombers above ruined towns
Will drop wreaths of roses down,
Doves will nest in the guns' throats,
And people will dance in the streets.
Whistles will bawl and bells will clang,
On that great day boys will hang
Hitler and Roosevelt on one tree,
Painlessly, in effigy,
To take their rank in history—
Roosevelt, Hitler, and Guy Fawkes
Hanged above the garden walks—
While the happy children cheer,
Without hate, without fear,
And new men plot a new war.

Had Jeffers read the thirty-ninth chapter of H.G. Wells' *The Outline of History*, which ends by noting that British planning for the next world was begun as soon as the first one ended? By 1947, when Jeffers began assembling his book *The Double Axe*, the prediction had lost its power to shock. By then, not planning for the next world war would have seemed shocking to many who thought "appeasement" not just cowardly but suicidal, though in fact the "appeasers" won the Second World War. Besides, by 1947 Roosevelt seemed a hero who died helping to save America from Hitler.

As the American and British bombing of Germany went on, a broadcaster's patriotic confusion apparently provoked Jeffers to write:

An Ordinary Newscaster
(written January 13, 1944)

I heard a radio-parrot, an ordinary newscaster,
Say this: "Tonight the German astronomers
Will be looking up at the sky: the moon will eclipse the planet
Jupiter: if our bombers come over
They'll look again." He said with the pride of patriotism, "The
German astronomers
Are interested in a red spot on Jupiter, they hope the eclipse will help
them learn something more
About the red spot. But our brave fliers are interested only in the red
splashes
Made by their falling bombs."

This is perhaps the most ignoble statement
we have heard yet, but unfortunately
It is in the vein. We are not an ignoble people, but rather generous;
but having been tricked
A step at a time, cajoled, scared, sneaked into war; a decent inexpert
people betrayed by men
Whom it thought it could trust; our whole attitude
Smells of that ditch.

So will the future peace. No multibillion credits,
no goodwill, no almsgiving;
Not even the courage of our young men, bitterly wasted, forever to
be honored, will be able to sweeten it.

The moon did eclipse Jupiter that night, but the eclipse ended before anyone in Germany could have seen it.[4] Even had they seen it, it would not have helped anyone

[4]Dr. Ian Halliday of the National Research Council in Ottawa re Jupiter's eclipse. According to Bertrand M. Peek, *The Planet Jupiter* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), the Great Red Spot measures about 8,000 by 25,000 miles but keeps changing its shape, size, color, brightness, and location. Peek sees it as a floating island of frozen helium which rises or sinks as the density of the atmosphere around it changes; other astronomers see it as a moon which failed to break away from its parent planet, or as a moon the planet captured, or as a puzzlingly persistent storm or eddy in Jupiter's cloud belts, as television pictures taken from 81,000 miles by the space craft Pioneer 11 in December, 1974 suggest. Jeffers apparently felt that the size, mystery, and beauty of the Spot, and of the universe, ought to remind us of our cosmic insignificance and make us gladly self-forgetful.

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observe or understand the Great Red Spot on Jupiter; it had vanished in 1943, and reappeared only after 1944. Apparently the broadcaster had scrambled together two news stories—one about the red spot disappearing, and one about the eclipse—and added his patriotic editorializing to reveal what Jeffers thought an ominous and disgusting preference for the smaller, briefer red spots made by exploding bombs, instead of the vast and lovely universe Jeffers regarded as God. By "that ditch" Jeffers may mean the ditch dug to catch the blood of slaughtered animals, as in Homer's poems, and his own "Come, Little Birds" three years earlier.[5] "Forever to be honored" seems an ironic echo of patriotic speeches, and meant to remind us of how quickly we forget those who died.

Jeffers wrote the date March 1, 1944 on the manuscript of "Wilson in Hell"—thirteen months before Franklin Roosevelt died. Two days before that date, Roosevelt vetoed a bill reducing taxes and the Senate majority leader Alben Barkeley resigned, saying the veto diminished the freedom of every American, but Roosevelt's enthusiasm for the Second World War, and not that veto, seems to have provoked this poem:

> Roosevelt died and met Wilson, who said "I blundered into it
> Through honest error, and conscience cut me so deep that I died
> In the vain effort to prevent future wars. But you
> Blew on the coal-bed, and when it kindled you deliberately
> Sabotaged every fire-wall that even the man who denied
> My hope had built. You have too much murder on your hands. I will
> not
> Speak of the lies and conniving. I cannot understand the Mercy
> That permits us to meet in the same heaven—or is this my hell?"

This bitter joke seems a curiously Christian lapse from Jeffers' usual detachment, perception, and compassion, in which he describes the universe as scientists have discovered it, mankind as tragic, and hell and heaven as only misleading Christian fictions. Usually his poems suggest that egocentric emotional reactions blind us, but here he demonstrates how they do by letting his righteous indignation keep him from asking why Roosevelt might have acted as he did, and what might have happened, had Roosevelt kept America out of the Second World War and had Hitler won.

The manuscript of "Oh Happy Astronomer" includes an isolated line which defines man as the only animal that hates himself, an opinion which also appears in section 29 of "The Inhumanist," the second half of the poem "The Double Axe." Section 23 mentions Hermann Goering's suicide in October, 1946, so Jeffers might have written both section 29 and "Oh Happy Astronomer" then or a bit later. In any case, both suggest that we save ourselves from ourselves, and crippling disgust, by turning to contemplate the almost totally unhuman universe instead of mankind:

> We turn away from ourselves, we cannot bear ourselves:
> Weakness and filth. Therefore we turn away from
> ourselves—to what? To our neighbor's
> Weakness and filth? Or to politics, weakness and filth
> On a world scale? Landscape, I say, is better;
> look up to the mountains and contemplate
> The endless ocean; water and rock will make clean and glad
> All that man soiled. Humanity was latent in them,
> and they spewed it out, they are quit of it.
> Or higher—oh happy astronomer—gaze at the manless glory,
> The inhuman stars, the fire-net that has the earth
> in its meshes but is guiltless of man.

In other words, as "The Inhumanist" says more tactfully,

> "The unique ugliness of
> man and his works . . .
> Seen astronomically, little and whole, in relation with
> time and vastness, the star-world,
> And the bitter end waiting for modern man,
> Disappears; it falls into pattern with the perpetual
> Beauty of things."[6]

Given so astronomical a perspective, even our faults seem vanishingly small.

The First World War made Jeffers painfully aware of suffering as a general condition of humanity, and from that moment on, for almost forty years, until his death in 1962, he kept trying both to detach himself from that suffering and to help his readers do so, by responding to the beauty of the universe. Because he felt the need for such a detachment so intensely without achieving it completely, his poems show both compassion and disgust, which makes them both interestingly complex and morally relevant to our condition: with more detachment or less disgust, he would have ignored human failings to take his own advice to concentrate on the almost totally unhuman universe, and so have left himself with almost no human subjects or audience.

As his poems generally do, "Oh Happy Astronomer" recommends a "rejection of human solipsism and recognition of the transhuman magnificence" of the universe as our salvation from ourselves as well as our creator; as Jeffers went on to explain much more explicitly in such later poems as "De Rerum Virtute" and "The Beginning and the End," water, rock, the planet's original air, and "the manless glory" of the nearest star, the sun, combined in complexly self-duplicating chemical reactions to create life. The shift of attention Jeffers recommends entails a mental and emotional evolution in which we climb "the great ladder out of the pit" of ourselves, to see much more, much less selfishly. "Oh Happy Astronomer" climbs that ladder line by line, from "ourselves" to "our neighbor's" to "politics" to "landscape," and since we pollute that, "higher" still, to the "inhuman stars" we cannot touch. Christians say we should love our neighbors as we do ourselves; Jeffers less smugly said we should love the world instead of ourselves. Each step up this ladder includes more of the world, and a less egocentric view as we escape from the morally as well as physically small to the infinite, eternal universe, and so reach a calmly impersonal yet compassionate awareness which seems much like the nirvana Buddhists try to reach. Instead of a Platonic or a Christian heaven of such abstract and possibly only verbal ideals as the Good, True, and Beautiful—whatever those ambiguously subjective words may mean—Jeffers recommends a heaven we can see, the

[5] "Come, Little Birds," *Be Angry At The Sun*, p 111-112.

[6] *The Double Axe*, p 109, vii; *The Beginning and the End and Other Poems* (New York: Random House, 1963), p 8; discussions with William Everson, Hamilton Jeffers, Gary Snyder, Bert Almon, Alan Watts. Grants from the American Philosophical Society, The Canada Council, and the University of Saskatchewan made this research possible.

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concretely real and heartbreakingly beautiful universe we already inhabit, most of it discovered only since Copernicus upset Christians by suggesting that it does not revolve around us. In seeing the world this way, we see what limits and creates us, and so may save ourselves from the blind and crippling fear, self-pity, and narcissistic delusions of importance which cause tragedies and much of the rest of human suffering, or so Jeffers suggests.

By "glory," Jeffers apparently meant the majesty, power, and beauty of God seen as shining out of heaven from the stars, a glory on which our lives literally depend. As Lucretius put it, we are what was once starfire; as the astronomer Harlow Shapley said twenty centuries later, we are stardust, and our lives depend upon the heat and light of the star we call the sun. William Everson suggests that Jeffers might have taken the metaphor of the world of stars as all one "fire-net" containing and controlling us from Hardy's *The Dynasts*, which describes the world and humans as controlled by God's "web of will," in which causes and results interweave in intricately ironic ways. Perhaps, though Hardy's metaphor seems remarkably unastronomical, and we do not know whether Jeffers read *The Dynasts*. It seems more likely that Jeffers took the metaphor from the astronomy he studied at Occidental College in 1903-05. From his text for that course, Charles A. Young's *A Textbook of General Astronomy*, which Jeffers' brother Hamilton, a professional astronomer, still had seventy years later, Robinson Jeffers would have known Newton's law of gravity, which says that every particle of the universe attracts every other, linking them all into one enormous net. We see most of what we see of it as stars, and their gravity controls the earth and us, making "the fire-net that has the earth in its meshes" accurate. As in the pre-Christian Hindu metaphor of the universe as Indra's net, every part of that net looks like a jewel, and reflects all the rest; Indra is the god of the heavens. As a result, as the Austrian physicist Ernst Mach argued in 1882, we cannot explain any part without referring to the universe as a whole. Even what we experience as inertia, the most inherent and in every sense universal property of matter, apparently results from every particle's relationship with the gravitational field of all the rest of the universe, a view also basic to Einstein's theory of relativity in both its special and general forms, and repeated tests keep proving them accurate.

As with a net, we cannot touch any part without affecting all the rest, an interdependency of individual and environment we now call ecology. That sense of total connectedness apparently led Jeffers to describe the universe as all one God, as in "The Beginning and the End," in itself another name for God:

> all things have their own
> awareness,
> As the cells of a man have; they feel and feed and influence each other, each unto all,
> Like the cells of a man's body making one being,
> They make one being, one consciousness, one
> God.

That metaphor makes us parts of God, and an ecologically responsible morality more obviously desirable, because by injuring others or the world we injure ourselves—perhaps the ultimate extension of the Golden Rule. Once aware of the universe and ourselves in this way, we save ourselves and achieve an unselfish bliss as we discover the world's beauty—and in this discovery, Jeffers became a religious as well as a historical prophet. □

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The Nature of the Beast, by Len Giovannitti. Random House.

The hero of this novel, Dante Ebreo, regards his life as a recapitulation of his father's. The perception that he is fulfilling a prescribed pattern is responsible, no doubt, for his view of himself as a "beast." In fact, he is trapped by his insatiable lust. He finally dissolves his marriage, escaping the confines of monogamy. The irony is that he then marries the same sort of woman he has just divorced, a woman who has served him well over the years, exactly as his wife had, as a mature, wise, patient, platonic, long-suffering companion and helpmate—a woman who *understands* him without quite satisfying his sexual need. Thus the cycle of his frustration, his peculiarly human failure, prepares to repeat itself, for this is the nature of the beast. Significantly, his second marriage is to a woman named Moira, which is the Greek for *fate;* the deterministic view of fate unites the character of animals with that of gods, in their ultimate degradation—a suitable attitude toward *human* nature in the present perspective.

Dante's father was an educated, gifted Italian of aristocratic descent who came to America during the early years of the century for a reason never explained; he then devotes his talent for leadership to the labor movement in its pioneer phase, distinguishing himself as an orator, poet and promiscuous lover; it is his sadism, the infidelity and cruelty of his relation to Dante's mother, that foreshadows his son's fate.

The son, too, is a writer whose inability to support himself and his family leads to his taking jobs—in journalism and television—that he tolerates for practical reasons. Also, the father, somewhat like the son, abandons his wife for a platonic association with an older woman whose attraction consists in her superior appreciation of his mind, character and work. Freudians will note not simply that, as the Greeks affirmed, character is fate but that the so-called repetition compulsion can have complicated, subtle Oedipal overtones; they might note, too, the intense ambivalence of both father and son: the father's aristocratic participation in the labor movement, the son's essentially heroic and egotistical sense of himself as "beast." – *Martin Lebowitz*

SYNECDOCHE

Brief Poetry Notices

☆☆☆☆ = Remarkable ☆☆ = Average

☆☆☆ = Fine Work ☆ = Dull Stuff

Stars Which See, Stars Which Do Not See, by Marvin Bell. Atheneum. $3.95.

☆☆☆☆

At once apothegmatic and existential, Bell's new voice sounds its familiar wit and rings insistent and clear.

Open Doorways, by Philip Appleman. Norton. $7.95.

☆½

No more and no less interesting than letters from an old friend who travels widely, these poems prove predictably prosaic back to back, and the occasional embroidery of purple patches does not relieve them.

The Mind-Reader, by Richard Wilbur. Harcourt. $6.95.

☆☆☆

Still the King of the Formalists, Wilbur shows no diminution of his powers in this somewhat miscellaneous volume, even if literary fashion has side-stepped him.

In Mediterranean Air, by Ann Stanford. Viking. $5.95.

☆☆

"What a montony of noble days and nights," Stanford says in what could be a gloss on her own book. The section "The Women of Perseus," however, raises its voice to more variation.

Relativity: A Point of View, by Kelly Cherry. Louisiana State. $3.95.

☆

But what is it? The huggermugger of poetic diction here dissipates Cherry's ideology: one takes it on faith that she has one. The sort of poetry Sara Teasdale might have written had she decided to go engagé.

Blood, Hook & Eye, by Dara Wier. University of Texas. $3.95.

☆☆☆½

Portraits of real character—and characters—their surfaces deliberately grainy and out of focus, distinguish this strong work which has that rare attribute: self-mockery.

Stretching Fence, by Sonya Dorman. Ohio University. $6.00; $3.00 paper.

☆

Yet another volume devoted to muted celebration of the diurnal. Why has this mis-interpretation of Williams proven to our poets as seductive as the suburbs? And as bland.

The Fuhrer Bunker: A Cycle of Poems in Progress, by W. D. Snodgrass. BOA Editions. $8.95; paper $4.95; signed cloth, $25.

☆☆☆

A chilling reconstruction of the last days of the Third Reich through dramatic poems in the voice of Hitler and his cronies. These seem poems for performance as much as reading: one feels sometimes he is experiencing a script as well as a book of poetry.

Stars, by C. G. Hanzlicek. University of Missouri. $6.00.

☆☆☆½

There is little fat nor folderol in these lean, tough-minded poems, their stare as steady as a constellation. Winner of the 1977 Devins Award.

How I Escaped From the Labyrinth and Other Poems by Philip Dacey. Carnegie-Mellon. $3.50.

☆☆☆½

A widely published younger poet's first collection shows his mastery of forms and rhythms, some inherited, some invented.

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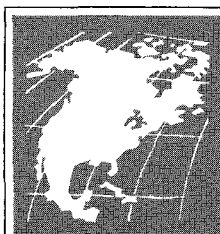

Lawrence Sturhahn

"Foul Play"

"You can tell a location by the number of coffee cups lying on the ground!"

–Movie homily

The day after the day that first-time director and third-time writer, Colin Higgins (he wrote "Silver Streak," and the cult classic, "Harold and Maude," before), finished shooting exteriors in San Francisco the rains came.

I recall a film with such a title—"The Rains Came"—but I can't locate a reference to it in the film encyclopedia now. It didn't exist or the title I remember is wrong, but the memory is very strong: India, thatched houses, Ronald Colman, elephants, and sheets of falling waer—I can see the pictures in my head. Certainly the recall is so specific partly because, sitting at my desk and looking out the window, I am watching a deluge. To myself I say: this is the way it rained in that movie I saw many years ago. I think about Ronald Colman and elephants, staring out the window and watching the rain. I have not seen it through this window as hard as this for two years. Then I thought, suddenly, no—I have never seen it through this window because the last time it was like this my office was in another part of the house. Watching the water fall straight down, listening to the drumming of it, seeing the way it spattered the window glass, I muse about memory and dream, how things change and how they remain the same.

2.

It used to be said that a director who didn't get rained on was lucky. In spite of the drought the odds were all against Colin Higgins shooting exteriors—the 1st Unit with the stars and the entourage, the 2nd Unit with the doubles to do the stunts—in November. That's the start of the rainy season in a normal year, and this year they had been predicting (hopefully) heavier than normal. So, considering what's come down since, he was lucky or the studio was, because for three and a half weeks Tom Miller and Ed Milkis' comedy-melodrama for Paramount Pictures, costing five million, shot dry and was home free (well, not *exactly* free, of course).

The last day outside was in front of San Francisco's city hall, a Baroque neo-classical building which plays in the movie for the San Francisco opera house (the real opera being not half so imposing). Although the two units worked mostly independently of each other, that day they worked together, shooting the end of the race against time which is the climax of the picture. In it the detective (Chevy Chase) and his lady friend (Goldie Hawn), in three different vehicles, start at one end of the city and roar to the opera house/city hall. The impetus for their wild ride is that if they are not in time the bad guys will assassinate the Pope, who is visiting San Francisco on a goodwill tour. Intercut in the finished film with menacing scenes in the opera house (to be shot later), the hazardous and stunt-filled drive is probably 10 or 15 minutes of screen time.

While the 1st Unit with the stars worked on scenes that delineate the plot up to the ending, the 2nd Unit with stunt doubles for the stars and the stunt drivers with cars to play with on the street did the race (which I keep wanting to call a chase, because in the classical cinematic sense that's what it is).

In almost every way a chase is *the* verity of film, the ultimate audience hook of what's-going-to-happen-next which is all visual and moves, as movies should—the faster the better. Many of the classic American films with many of the classic American comics, Fields, and Keaton, and Laurel and Hardy, were mostly chases with impossible and often hilarious stunts in them. Is the car going to get across the tracks in front of the train . . . see the plane fly under the Golden Gate Bridge . . . oh-oh! One of the (if not *the*) greatest westerns, the original "Stage Coach," directed by John Ford (with John Wayne playing the Ringo Kid) was simply one long chase, or rather a series of chases on different levels, with most of the passengers in the coach after something and the Indians after the passengers. Ford shot the picture in Monument Valley in northern Arizona, when Lordsburg, where the coach is going, is actually in southwest New Mexico. I drove the real route once, along Interstate 10, and if it's not as stunning as Monument Valley it's an interesting desert and the mountains that you see to the south, along the Mexican border, were Apache hiding places in fact.

In his book about "the art, technology, language, history, and theory of film and media," *How To Read A Film*, James Monaco writes:

> "Central to both Griffith's melodrama and Sennett's farce was the concept of the chase, still a dominant element of popular film. Dating from the early examples of Porter and Hepworth, with antecedents in the conventions of Victorian theater, the chase was the single great element of narrative dramaturgy that film did not share with theater. It brought theater out of the proscenium arch (real or ideal) and into the world, and it became a quintessential model of the battle between protagonist and antagonist that drives all dramatic narrative."

If chases are an essence of film, then stunts and stunt people are a seminal film craft. Those were the guys that took the falls from horses, crashed cars, and ran along the tops of trains in vintage films, westerns, comedies, and whatever.

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Craig Baxley, doubling Chevy Chase, and Glynn Rubin, doubling Goldie Hawn, start off in a grey Lincoln limousine. Several wrong-ways on one-way streets and other excitements later that car ends up going through the front window of Luigi's Pizza Parlor on its grand opening day. Whereupon the two leap out waving a police badge, and commandeer a camper truck that's pulling out of a parking space, and continue wildly. Until, in order to avoid an intersection with crossing pedestrians, a turn under an overhanging garage roof tears the camper top off the pick-up, and this second vehicle ends up smashed into a parked car (inside which there was a remote camera). That is *86* for the camper, and egg on the face of the spacey Coloradian with long hair that owned it. But, driving along the street at this moment is the airport limousine for a hotel in Japantown (in San Francisco), and our heroes now take this black Cadillac. After a spectacular jump off a ramp built over the crest of one of the city's well known hills, this third car screams around the corner of Golden Gate Avenue and caroms down Polk Street to slide to a halt in front of the opera (city hall). After that the 1st Unit shoots the real Chevy Chase and the real Goldie Hawn and some atmosphere dressed as cops running up the red-carpeted steps into the foyer. The approach to the opera, that was the last shot and wrap day for the 2nd Unit.

The 1st Unit went on to shoot a day or two more in San Francisco, doing interiors with crowds of atmosphere in the foyer (while outside it rained), and then, over Thanksgiving, moved back to Los Angeles to shoot on the studio lot. "Foul Play" is the name of the picture; principal photography finished in January, and the picture is scheduled for release in July.

LAWRENCE STURHAHN, the NAR's regular film commentator, proves he hasn't lost his touch by working on the Chevy Chase-Goldie Hawn comedy, "Foul Play."

3.

I have worked on pictures in which there were chases and stunts before. There were several pilots for possible cops & robbers series in New York, one car chasing another through the real traffic, going the *same* direction on one or another of the wide avenues on the west side. Another time a camera car towed an actor on roller skates through the garment district, and in the same picture a chase was staged with actors running through a crowded New York department store on 34th Street. I remember an ordinary customer bringing the principal actor down with a flying tackle because he thought the fleeing man was a real thief. And there were several other potentially hazardous misapprehensions that occurred because the surprised people in the store knew nothing about a movie being made.

And once, a TV series in a December night when it was snowing and there was ice floating in the Hudson, from a fifty-foot yacht off Pier 57

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with the temperature around 36 degrees, these stunt doubles in wet suits went into the freezing river while the camera rolled. Supposed to be a band of innovative jewel thieves after a priceless gem in a safe in a locked cage on the pier, in the picture they succeed, but in the shooting of the picture one of them almost drowned in the frigid water.

No, I was not unfamiliar with stunts, I thought, but then I found out what I was familiar with was second order stunt work: casual, almost catch as catch can, withal professional, but nothing like the stunts, the stunt persons, the mechanical rigging and careful planning for the stunts in "Foul Play." Down in Hollywood there's an organization called "Stunts Unlimited," and to it belong not only the two stunt doubles, Baxley and Rubin, but the five stunt drivers (who also sat inside the pre-rigged break-away pizza parlor when the Lincoln came through the front window), and the 2nd Unit director, Jim Arnett, himself a stunt man and a member of the Directors Guild of America. One of the five, incidentally, was Hal Needham, who directed "Smokey and the Bandit" (with Burt Reynolds), a yahoo film that grossed 92 million give or take, second only to "Star Wars" in 1977.

4.

Picture that black Cadillac limousine, having just smashed its way through a break-away flower stand, to start up a steep series of hills, bouncing high and hard over the crests. At the top—suddenly—there's a construction zone with caution signs, lights, barriers, and a frantic flag man; ahead, at the crest, looms an enormous pile of dirt. The limousine roars to the dirt and then over it, taking off into the air off the hill crest and landing with a jangling crash 40-odd feet down the sloping street on the other side, to screech on around a corner and out of sight.

The sequence requires two Cadillacs, one of them extensively adapted to (hopefully) withstand the jump. A steel sled-like covering is welded to the frame in the front for the car to land and slide on because it is assumed the suspension and front wheels will collapse on impact. For fear of possible explosion and fire the gas tank has been removed and there is only enough gas aboard for the run at and over the platform which will propel the car into the air, A thousand odd pounds of lead weights are bolted into the trunk to make certain it isn't engine heavy; the car should come down flat, not in a nose dive that will have it cartwheel, end over end, down the hill. Stripped is what the inside is, with a steel cage built around the driving seat into which Baxley will strap himself. Beside him, in place of Glynn Rubin who has ridden there through the thick and thin of everything up to that point, is mounted an Eyemo camera wearing a blond wig along with its 85 filter. (This camera will photograph the classic P.O.V. shot, and with its wig might look like Goldie Hawn/Glynn Rubin if it's caught by the four other cameras on the hillside, set to photograph various angles of the Cadillac's flight.)

The weight of the car, the angle and height of the ramp, the slope of the hill, the expected distance it will be in the air, all of this has been noted and fed into a computer. Everything is built to specification with great care. There is an enormous tension in the air just before the jump, because there is a live man driving and he could be dead.

The sequence may last a minute in the finished film, the series of shots made of the limousine (the double for the rigged one) roaring up the hill, and at the top another series of it going through the barriers and ending up with its radiator in the dirt: that's one day's shooting. That night the dirt is loaded on three enormous trucks and a crew of special effects men work to assemble the units of the pre-built sections of ramp off which, on day two, the car will fly. When it's emplaced the ramp will be camouflaged from the cameras, now on the other side of the hill, with the same dirt. On the down side are prop cars, inoperative wrecks which have been painted to look new and towed into positions along the curb in front of the street light stanchions. The Cadillac might come off the hill (in spite of all the care) and down the hill like a bowling ball weighing several tons.

And to make things a little tighter the shot must be photographed before 11 a.m. for the sunlight to be right. Three of the stunt men are stationed at the bottom of the hill with heavy duty fire extinguishers. An ambulance and the emergency room in a nearby hospital have been alerted, although Baxley has not been told this. There are four San Francisco motorcycle officers—two of whom work regularly with the 2nd Unit—stationed at various intersections at the foot of the hill. Atmosphere (it is impolite and demeaning to be called *extras*) are stationed along the street to be passers-by and make it look real. (They are also there to act as safety controls: to stop somebody who doesn't know a movie is being made from walking into the car's path . . . somebody backing inadvertently out of a garage.)

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5.

Some actors claim they do their own stunts. Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. was, according to some reports, a stuntman first and an actor second, but his flagrant swashbuckling established both a style and an audience. He looms large in American cinematic history for that persona as well as being co-founder with Mary Pickford, Charles Chaplin, and D. W. Griffith of United Artists Film Corporation in 1919.

His son, too, took on the mantle and wore it well. "Gunga Din" is another of the films I keep seeing in my memory. In it Fairbanks, Jr., Victor McLaglen, and Cary Grant are all terrific, and it looks like they did their own stunts. The attack by the thuggee followers of Kali on the village where the three Indian army sergeants have their patrol bivouacked is a quintessential stunt scene: leaping from roof-top to roof-top, last second saber cuts to sever the sparking fuses of sticks of dynamite they're using as hand grenades, and the final high dive from the cliffs into the river to escape.

Burt Lancaster, who was a gymnast and a circus performer before he was an actor, also played a Douglas Fairbanks role, adding just the right amount of caricature to make the "Crimson Pirate" (1952) a joyful spoof of Fairbanks' "The Black Pirate" (1926), made as a spoof, too. Lancaster appeared at the San Francisco Film Festival in '76 with a retrospective of vignettes from his career which stretches from just after World War II to the present, in which was evinced his excellence in a considerable and varied group of roles. Embodied in a rugged exterior is a surprising sensitivity, and partly that is evident in the graceful movements of his body and head which come, I think, from being an athlete.

Once I witnessed two young stars who were terrified when faced with doing a scene that took place on a rocky cliff above some raging white-water rapids. They called for stunt men, but as it turned out for various reasons (among them the fact that they were still ascending stars and the director had more clout—which is the pecking order of movie making) they did their own stunts. Their nervousness the crew saw as cowardly, and liking neither of them very well, it reinforced the negative feelings they carried already. At the time I was as contemptuous as the rest, but after thinking about it, there is a justification for their fear. What would a pianist do without his hands, or a painter without his eyes? And a movie actor without his face? There's some real information to that effect in what happened to Montgomery Clift's career after the automobile accident which disfigured him. His face, even after plastic surgery, had some lumpish quality and he never was the same.

Not anti-heroes in the traditional sense, certainly not bumbling or foolish (if a little clannish and macho-boyish), perhaps these stunt people are a new genre: *neoanti*-heroes—compleat modern persons. Not only are they themselves anonymous, but standing in for actors who are also playing make-believe, that's twice removed. And yet there must be some ego rub-off in doubling for stars, taking chances the stars can't or won't. And also in the hierarchy of a movie company where the actor can be at the top or the bottom of the pecking order (depending, along with clout, on how the crew likes him/her/them) stunt people are *professionals,* and have the same status as other technical departments—the electricians—the grips. For as directors and producers and even stars come and go, so the professionals go on. But they all bear scars, damaged legs that have almost been ripped off, torn ligaments, compressed vertebrae; they are survivors as everybody in the modern age needs to be a survivor—albeit that our eyes show the circles of stress rings from living in our time.

* * *

According to Screen Actors Guild the daily scale for a stunt person is $225; weekly it's $842. On top of that is the particular fee assigned and agreed to by the producer before the stunt is performed. That could be another hundred, or two, or maybe even five to six—depending on the difficulty (and the danger) involved. And for such comparatively paltry sums these people strap themselves into automobiles which they consciously wreck. They garb themselves in flame retardant suits and masks and get ignited. They drop from helicopters and dance on the wings of planes in flight. And from any one of these—if something were to go wrong—they could die.

There is then a reason for a certain adolescent *camaraderie* among them, a justification for the macho, and the obsession with such practical jokes as putting glue in a hair tonic bottle and exploding cigars. They have their own language as any professional fraternity does: ". . .on the bind and give him some air. . .," ". . .when he makes his one-eighty. . .," ". . .get on all fours. . . ." But what is the difference between bravery and foolhardiness—five bills?

At the screening of dailies from

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Chevy Chase & Goldie Hawn

the shooting at Luigi's (the Lincoln coming through the window which was really candy-glass), where the interior was photographed at the same time as the exterior for obvious reasons, in the foreground are the stunt people as patrons of the restaurant—waiting to make the dash out from in front of the careening car. Cues have been established. The structure of the interior—an overhanging shelf, the counter, and fake ovens—are all designed and built to break away in specific directions. But in the screening room, with no sound, there's an eerie quality to the slow motion images—the waiting. The postures of the patrons are frozen, but one of them obviously telegraphs that something is going to happen. And the comment is made that *that* should be pointed out—it's a no-no. Another comment at another time is that too much praise is not good for the performers of the craft. And one of them says: "I think about how to make sure I do it right the first time—so I don't have to do it again!" (And I think, but there's only one take anyway—on the spectacular ones where the danger factor is high!)

Craftspeople they are, taking rigorous care to plan things right. On some streets the five stunt drivers in their cars would fill in and dodge around whichever one of the three vehicles Baxley was driving at the time. Sometimes they were going in the same direction, and sometimes going against the flow of traffic which was established by atmosphere cars which worked the shots but didn't do any stunts. Beforehand, the drivers and the doubles and the stunt director would squat down around a bunch of Tootsie Toy cars on the sidewalk, working out the moves. If there was time and it was practical, quarter speed rehearsals were accomplished. But the fact of the matter was that in most stunts somebody was in jeopardy of limb—and often life.

7.

It's been a long time since I worked in the business, and before "Foul Play" started I wondered if it had changed? I was sure I had. I remembered a cameraman I once knew saying wolfishly: "Where else can you make this kind of money—except with a machine gun?" Talking about the movie business as compared to robbing banks, if a techni-

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cian's pay is small compared to what (often with points) some stars get, still he was right. The money's good, and mostly the work is various. On location particularly it's a new deal most every day. You run around the streets like you owned them, and that's an arrogance you have to work to militate against.

It's also hard work for long hours, and if something—mostly technical but also emotional—can go wrong, it will. That's Murphy's Law. And in those moments of tension, either real or imagined, people wear frazzled egos on the outside. There's the absolute protocol, and the crazy humor and a sense of big people playing kid games, sometimes, like kids, very nasty.

Changed and unchanged, that's what I found out. There's new equipment and faster film, but the production techniques are mostly the same. The heavy is the production manager, and the hero is the accountant at his desk with the petty cash slips, per diem allowances, and the adding machine, tape curling out over the top and on to the floor. One day when we had finished shooting and were back in the office somebody picked up the six feet of tape still attached to the machine. "Hey, Donald," he said to the accountant, "you only put in half a day so far."

But it was fun. There was a certain *sang-froid* (most of the time) on the 2nd Unit. Eleven of us were on the crew, plus the seven stunt people, and five teamsters who drove the one equipment truck, the utility prop truck, the honey wagon, and the station wagon that the director, script supervisor, first assistant director, and director of photography (cameraman) rode in. There was also a location coordinator and the two aforementioned motorcycle cops, Harve and Wink, who were very savvy about movie making (having worked on "The Streets of San Francisco" for a long time), and something of swashbucklers themselves. If that sounds like a lot of people and vehicles, compared to the ponderous 1st Unit with its entourage of hangers-on, its enormous crew, its convoy of trucks emblazoned with the Paramount logo, we were like pilot fish compared to a whale. And we finished on schedule, smiling, with only a little attendant *mishegas* from various applications of Murphy's Law. And nobody died. □

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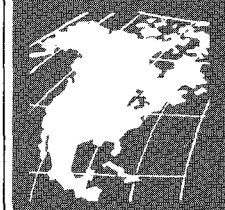

LETTERS

Energy: Technologies Hard & Soft

To the Editor:

I have just read with interest but some disappointment Fred Hallberg's article on breeder reactors in the fall issue of *The North American Review*. Certainly he is to be commended for his articulate explanation of the complicated issue of breeder reactors. I recently attended a conference at which papers given by nuclear scientists and "specialists" lend even more credence to his essay. I further admire and respect the fact that he has as a non-scientist taken it upon himself to study a science and a technology that is not in his "field." If more of the professoriate would follow Hallberg's example, the academic institutions of this country would go a long way toward meeting their ethical and wisdom-sharing roles with responsibility—a responsibility they are presently failing, in my view.

My disappointment with the essay stems from my judgment that Hallberg's argument is over-simplified or restricted: it does not consider the possibility that there may be a kind of economy other than the one to which a full reliance on conventional and breeder reactors would irrevocably commit us. I do not here suggest a return to some paleolithic economy nor a "back to nature" kind of society. Rather, I suggest a consideration of what Amory Lovins, a physicist-generalist-author of books dealing with non-nuclear futures, has called "soft technology." His arguments include a call for a de-centralization of energy production for heating, the use of conservation technology in power production and power use instead of the over-use of energy for the development of fuel sources and power production, the use of "cogeneration" or generating of electricity as a by-product of process steam normally produced by industry, reliance on renewable energy flows, and the matching of scale and energy quality to end-use needs. I admittedly over-simplify his alternatives here, but urge a reading of his essay, "Energy Strategy: The Road Not Taken?" first published in the October 1976 *Foreign Affairs* journal.

In my judgment, Lovins answers every technological argument posed by nuclear power advocates, and goes a long way toward answering the socio-political arguments raised by those advocates. Lovins is unusual in that he perceives the vast complexity of present and future global energy needs on more fronts, and in more depth, than any other spokesperson I have heard or read. More than that, he offers the kind of thinking or form of mind that is innovative and "holistic" in its perceptions. Which is to say, the "endemic nuttiness" Hallberg notes among the emotional reactions against nuclear power is not

present in Lovins' broad perspective (although he does not ignore the real dangers of proliferation and terrorism). To the contrary, he represents the form of mind I believe is imperative to all thinking citizens who are concerned (or not concerned) with the future of life and the planet which sustains it. I would go so far as to speculate that if he had read Lovins' essay, Hallberg would never have written *his*.

Loree Rackstraw
Cedar Falls, Iowa

The NAR welcomes letters from readers. We prefer brevity, and ask the right to edit for reasons of style and space limitations – never for reasons of content.

Mr. Hallberg responds:

I agree with much of what Ms. Rackstraw says concerning the structure of the choices facing us. I think she did an admirable job of summarizing Lovins' thesis. Would I have not wanted to write the article if I had read Lovins ahead of time? That seems doubtful to me.

There is little in Lovins' article which is new to the post-'73 energy policy debate. His views are, for my money, indistinguishable from those of Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*. Ms. Rackstraw may recall that one long essay in that collection was devoted to the economic and social costs of atomic energy, and that the whole book was a multi-faceted defense of "soft" technology. I would like to underline the similarity of their evidence as well. Both argue almost exclusively from qualitative, impressionistic grounds. Lovins occasionally mentions a number. But read closely, these numbers are themselves metaphors and guestimates, rather than the results of attempts at controlled quantitative measurement. I am in a way relieved to discover this about Lovins, for then I too am able to use qualitative and impressionistic evidence without having to feel guilty about it.

The point on which we all agree, I believe, is that we are going to be poorer in the future than we have been in the immediate past. This is because our wealth has come largely from cheap energy, which will be cheap no longer. The question is: which policy or set of policies will make us least poor? Lovins' claim that the soft technology option will, of the open alternatives, make us the least poor seems to me to be bare assertion without any convincing evidence to back it up. He makes some rhetorical hay in this context by comparing future hard technology energy costs with past cheap energy costs, while comparing future soft technology energy costs with future hard technology energy costs. This does

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make the soft technologies look, comparatively, good. But the brutal fact is that "soft technologies" of which we have any curent knowledge will leave us much poorer in the future than we have been, using oil and gas at the cheap rates which were the norm until 1973. One can appreciate this by considering the fact which Lovins acknowledges—namely, that all the basic technology envisioned for the soft technology route has already been developed. The techniques of solar heating and cooling are at least a hundred years old, and the techniques of solar-thermal and wind-electric generation are fifty years old. Yet none of these capabilities were developed because they couldn't come close to matching the cost and convenience of gas and oil. It is that expensive source, which has little room for "technological surprise" (Lovins' phrase) and hence little room for marked improvements, to which Lovins would have us turn.

The essence of Lovins' recommendation, as I see it, is that we accept the risks of future poverty under the soft technology option, because of the social benefits of a decentralized economy and because of the dangers of nuclear proliferation. Ms. Rackstraw may be surprised to hear it, but I too am attracted to that policy decision. I am sure she and I could adapt to the inconvenience and heavy labor entailed by the soft technology option. I am probably one of the few faculty on my own campus who actually lived in the pre-electric era in Western Minnesota before Rural Electrification came through in 1941. We read in the evening by kerosene lamps, the outhouse was thirty yards from the house, and there was no running water. Yet my memories of that time are largely positive. I *do* remember the pain and frustration of pushing the water cart from the windmill to the house before I was really big and strong enough to handle it, but I cannot recall any sense of deprivation due to not having a daily hot shower.

The problem I have with Ms. Rackstraw's proposal is that I strongly suspect that my values and her values, which would enable us to make the transition, are not at all typical. She and I by choice drive 1967 automobiles, live in very modest homes, and get the bulk of our daily enjoyment from reading books and conversing with friends. That we do this by choice disqualifies us as representatives of the body politic. Our values *could* be inculcated in large numbers of people only by strenuous educational efforts which would pretty certainly involve a large measure of coercion, and which might prove fruitless in any case. The prohibition of energy waste will involve educational and moral problems similar to the prohibition of alcohol. Lovins' claim that such a transition to general virtue and rationality will occur naturally and peacefully is simply incredible to me.

Finally, I want to point out that the bifurcation of our choice space into *either* the hard technology route *or* the soft technology route is an idealization for the purposes of discussion only. His claim that they are in fact mutually exclusive and unmixable rests on his hopes about eliminating social hierarchies and the hazards of atomic war, rather than on facts. It is possible to develop both because we are in point of fact developing both, and what is actual is surely possible. It is *easy* to do both for the very reason Lovins mentions. The soft technology option involves processes so basic and techniques so simple that prototypes are cheap and easy to produce and test. If they also prove to be anything like as workable and cheap as Lovins hopes they will be, they will inevitably displace the hard technology option in the market place, the way transistors replaced vacuum tubes. What will probably happen is that both the soft (largely solar) technologies and the hard (largely nuclear) technologies will continue to be developed together, with the solar collectors providing much of the future requirement for warm water and space heat, with atomic power plants providing the bulk of the high grade electrical and mechanical energy required by our industrial enterprises and our transportation system.

All of our guesses rest on impressionistic extrapolations from a terribly vague body of evidence. I do harbor some hopes for some of the soft technology possibilities. But at present it seems to me that the combined hard-and-soft technology base I mentioned above will enable us to remain so much *less* poor than a pure soft technology option would, that it holds less threat of economic collapse, social unrest, and revolution than do Lovins' recommendations.

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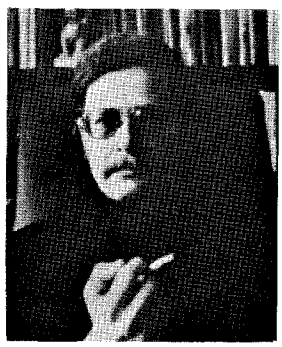

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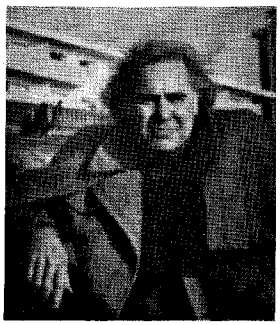

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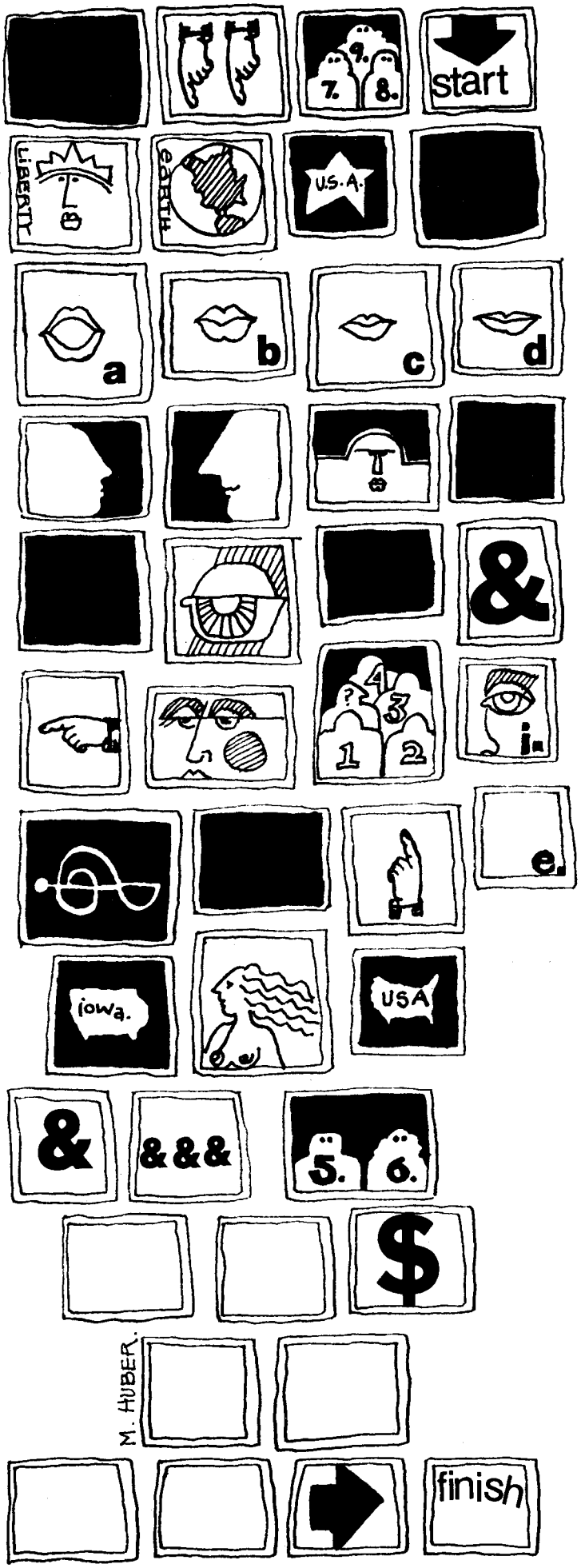

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